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POUND AND BROWNING: IMAGE AND PERSONA

BY

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled Pound and Browning: Image and Persona, submitted by Elizabeth Bruce in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

Pound has frequently expressed an interest in Browning's poetry and in particular in Sordello. This thesis represents an attempt to consider the cause and nature of Pound's interest in Browning.

An examination of Browning's poetry has revealed Browning's primary interest in 1) finding an objective vehicle for the expression of a complex self, and 2) expressing in a language essentially linear the single unified moment of perception. In an attempt to solve these problems, Browning in his poetry experiments with the use of a mask and with innovations in form by which he attempts to escape the linear flow of language and plot.

Pound, originally conceiving of the Cantos as his Sordello, is interested in both Browning's statement of these aesthetic problems and in his technical innovations. Pound's use of the mask, the image and the ideogramic method of the Cantos are directed toward solving the same aesthetic problems that concerned Browning, and represent further developments of the technical solutions to these problems that Browning adopted.

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MESMERISM

'And a cat's in the water-butt.' - Robert Browning

Aye you're a man that! ye old mesmerizer
Tyin' your meanin' in seventy swadelin's,
One must of needs be a hang'd early riser
To catch you at worm turning. Holy Odd's bodykins!

'Cat's i' the water-butt!' Thought's in your verse-barrel,
Tell us this thing rather, then we'll believe you,
You, Master Bob Browning, spite your apparel
Jump to your sense and give praise as we'd lief do.

You wheeze as a head-cold long-tonsilled Calliope,
But God! what a sight you ha' got o' our in'ards,
Mad as a hatter but surely no Myope,
Broad as all ocean and leanin' man-kin'ards.

Heart that was big as the bowels of Vesuvius,
Words that were wing'd as her sparks in eruption,
Eagled and thundered as Jupiter Pluvius,
Sound in your wind past all signs o'corruption.

Here's to you, Old Hippety-Hop o' the accents,
True to the Truth's sake and crafty dessector,
You grabbed at the gold sure; had no need to pack cents
Into your versicles.

Clear sight's elector! - Ezra Pound.

PREFACE

Und überhaupt ich stamm aus Browning.
Pourquoi nier son père?[1]

If poets were to be considered solely on the basis of the aura of impressions, facts, prejudices and historical accidents that comprise a poetic reputation, it might be difficult to find two other poets with a public image as contrasted as that of Pound and Browning. Browning has been so firmly cast in his role as pride of the Victorian dining table and sturdy propagator of vestry disputes that an association of any kind between him and the 'man of no fortune' formerly of St. Elizabeth's Hospital seems on the surface ridiculous. Possibly as a result, little detailed attention has been paid by critics concerned with Browning to Pound's frequent statements, beginning fifty years ago, of his interest in Browning's serious experimentation[2]:

> I have read Browning off and on for seventeen years with no small pleasure and admiration, and am one of the few people who know anything about his Sordello.[3]

The allusions to Browning dispersed in Pound's prose[4] and poetry and Pound's early dramatic monologues written in the style of Browning establish without any doubt the fact of Pound's debt to Browning, but the exact nature of this debt is a little more difficult to determine. On the surface, apart from a common interest in the early Italian Renaissance, the two poets seem to have little in common. A clue to the nature of the association between these two poets can be found in Pound's recurring statements

that he considers as a necessary part of the development of a poetic technique in this century, the trying, rejecting, and assimilating of the major poetic innovations that he can discover in world literature. Pound is interested in Browning's poetry because of Browning's concern with many of the serious aesthetic problems arising from the contemporary artistic environment, and because Browning technically marked out much of the path of modern poetic innovation.

The aim of this thesis is to place the aesthetic ideas and technical innovations of Pound and Browning within the same sphere of reference. No attempt has been made at a complete assessment of either poet, but rather certain areas where their interests and ideas seem to merge have been examined. This study is divided into three sections: (1) The Aesthetic Ideas -- which centres on a discussion of Sordello largely because of Pound's interest in this poem; (2) The Mask, and (3) The Poetic Idiom. It is hoped that such a juxtaposition will at least partially expose some aspects of Browning's poetry which stimulated and influenced Pound.

I

THE AESTHETIC IDEAS

1. Introduction

> You had your business:
> To set out so much thought, so much emotion;
> To paint, more real than any dead Sordello,
> The half or third of your intensest life
> And call that third Sordello;
> And you'll say, "No, not your life,
> He never showed himself".
> Is't worth the evasion, what were the use
> Of setting figures up and breathing life upon them,
> Were't not our life, your life, my life, extended?[1] -
> Ezra Pound.

In Sordello, Browning discusses the poetic development and problems of self expression and communication of the troubadour poet Sordello. Sordello appears against an animated historical background. More than one critic, however, has pointed to a certain lack of historical authenticity, as Pound does in "Three Cantos":

> The rough men swarm out
> In robes that are half Roman, half like the Knave of Hearts;
> And I discern your story:
> Peire Cardinal
> Was half fore-runner of Dante. Arnaut's that trick
> Of the unfinished address,
> And half your dates are out, you mix your eras;
> For that great font Sordello sat beside -
> 'Tis an immortal passage, but the font? -
> Is some two centuries outside the picture -
> Does it matter?[2]

'The historical decoration', Browning states in his preface to the second edition of the poem, 'was purposely of no more importance than a background requires; and my stress lay on the incidents in the development of a soul: little else is worth study'.[3] The soul developed is that of a failure, who senses power within him but is unable to relate this power to anything external to himself - objects, people, words, actions. This inward-turning soul sits uneasily on the early Renaissance figure, a fact carefully noted by Browning:

> Fool, who spied the mark
> Of leprosy upon him, violet dark
> Already as he loiters? Born just now,
> With the new century, beside the glow
> And efflorescence out of barbarism.[4]

There is none of the frustration and hesitation of Browning's Sordello in the clear thinking patriot, the Sordello who meets Dante at the entrance of Purgatory, and is praised by Dante as one of the poet-politicians most active in the fight against tyranny.

Browning has transformed both the historical Sordello and his background to form a mask through which he can discuss his own aesthetic problems. The mask, though impressed into the material by the creator, is not identical with the creator. Sordello's tale represents merely one possible working out of Browning's problems. This type of oblique partial identification - the historical Sordello, the Sordello in the poem, Browning - sets off the poem dynamically. The mask does not remain a neutral vehicle for exploring Browning's ideas, but is given life by the content

and clash of personalities. Similarly, the background is not a neutral portrayal of a typical Renaissance milieu, but is simultaneously the historical thirteenth century, the Pre-Raphaelite golden age of poets who both acted and expressed, and Browning's contemporary world. The result, the poem Sordello, in spite of its diffuseness and at times unnecessary complexity, deserves to be remembered not by means of all the epithets lazily applied to it, but as one of the more complete and prophetic poetic explorations of the nineteenth century artistic environment.

Pound has described Sordello as one of the finest masks ever presented, and his interest in the poem is readily apparent in the first draft of three cantos, where he mentions Sordello specifically as a possible model for The Cantos:

> Hang it all, there can be but one Sordello!
> But I say I want to, say I take your whole bag of tricks,
> Let in your quirks and tweeks, and say the thing's an art-form,
> Your Sordello and that the modern world
> Needs such a rag-bag to stuff all its thought in;
> Say that I dump my catch, shiny and silvery
> As fresh sardines flapping and slipping on the marginal cobbles?[5]

Both Pound and Browning are artists concerned primarily with establishing the role of the artist in modern society, and in finding the new modes of expression appropriate to this artist. The problems of the artist always remain a part of the basic subject matter of their poetry. Both participate in the Pre-Raphaelite return to the early Renaissance in Italy as a point of departure for their aesthetics.

For Pound, the return to the Mediterranean world for self-discovery is only one of the many similar voyages. As a result, the influence of Sordello in the final draft of The Cantos is less apparent:

> Hang it all, Robert Browning,
> There can be but the one 'Sordello'.
> But Sordello, and my Sordello?
> Lo Sordels si fo di Mantovana.
> Sho-shu churned in the sea.
> Seal sports in the spray-whited circles of cliff-wash,
> Sleek head, daughter of Lir,
> eyes of Picasso
> Under black fur-hood, lithe daughter of Ocean.[6]

For Pound, the 'periplum'[7] of Sordello failed to be inclusive enough, although the object of the journey remains the same.

2. The Difficulty of Self Expression

> If thou hast seen my shade sans character,
> If thou hast seen that mirror of all moments,
> That glass to all things that o'ershadow it,
> Call not that mirror me, for I have slipped
> Your grasp, I have eluded.[8] - Ezra Pound, The Flame

a. Sordello

Sordello is the tale of a struggle for self expression by a poet who is caged in his own soul and has lost the key. The lines of communication between Sordello and the external world have been completely cut off. Sordello can never become like Eglamor, the court poet he deposes, the type of poet who loses his own identity in the contemplation of an external object, who expresses as easily

and as automatically as he perceives. Sordello perceives only his own reflection:

> For there's a class that eagerly looks, too,
> On beauty, but, unlike the gentler crew,
> Proclaims each new revealment born a twin
> With a distinctest consciousness within,
> Referring still the quality, now first
> Revealed, to their own soul - its instinct nursed
> In silence, now remembered better, shown
> More thoroughly, but not the less their own;
> A dream come true; the special exercise
> Of any special function that implies
> The being fair, or good, or wise, or strong,
> Dormant within their nature all along -
> Whose fault? So, homage, other souls direct
> Without, turns inward.[9]

Sordello's main aim is to realize all of his potentialities. He finds himself unable to follow any one specific path since this would be a narrowing process and would automatically cut off development in other directions:

> Himself, inactive, yet is greater far
> Than such as act, each stooping to his star,
> Acquiring thence his function; he has gained
> The same result with meaner mortals trained
> To strength or beauty, moulded to express
> Each the idea that rules him; since no less
> He comprehends that function, but can still
> Embrace the others, take of might his fill
> With Richard as of grace with Palma, mix
> Their qualities, or for a moment fix
> On one; abiding free meantime, uncramped
> By any partial organ, never stamped
> Strong, and to strength turning all energies -
> Wise, and restricted to becoming wise -
> That is, he loves not, nor possesses One
> Idea, that, star-like over lures him on
> To its exclusive purpose.[10]

By chance, he stumbles on artistic expression as a means of remaining potentially all of the things he might be:

"Let men perceive
"What I could do, a mastery believe,
"Asserted and established to the throng
"By their selected evidence of song
"Which now shall prove, whate'er they are, or seek
"To be, I am. Whose words, not actions speak,
"Who change no standards of perfection, vex
"With no strange forms created to perplex,
"But just perform their bidding and no more,
"At their own satiating - point give o'er,"
.....Song, not deeds,
(For we got tired) was chosen. Fate would brook
Mankind no other organ."

Sordello achieves a popular success through his use of conventional themes and heroes, but the essence of his nature is an inability to rest in any one position. He turns to the language itself as an arena for further development:

He left imagining, to try the stuff
That held the imagined thing, and, let it writhe
Never so fiercely, scarce allowed a tithe
To reach the light - his language. How he sought
The cause, conceived a cure, and slow re-wrought
That Language, - welding words into the crude
Mass from the new speech around him, till a rude
Armour was hammered out, in time to be
Approved beyond the Roman panoply
Melted to make it, - boots not.[12]

Sordello discovers in language a new source of frustration. He experiences the act of perception as a unified experience. To break this unified perception down into abstract principles so that it can be communicated, and to express this perception by means of a language welded to the march of subject, verb, object is to falsify this experience:

> Piece after piece that armour broke away,
> Because perceptions whole, like that he sought
> To clothe, reject so pure a work of thought
> As language: thought may take perception's place
> But hardly co-exist in any case,
> Being its mere presentment - of the whole
> By parts, the simultaneous and the sole
> By the successive and the many.[13]

Sordello remains convinced that language is an inadequate means for the expression of the complex tangles of his own consciousness.

Sordello's awareness of his inability to express himself in language becomes more pressing. He finds that even in conversation before he can answer,

> A tangle of conclusions must be stripped
> At any risk ere, trim to pattern clipped,
> They matched rare specimens the Mantuan flock
> Regaled him with, each talker from his stock
> Of sorted-o'er opinions.[14]

Despairing of ever being able to express himself completely, Sordello retreats to Goito and his early isolated imaginative world, and writes no more:

> The last face glances through the eglantines,
> The last voice murmurs, 'twixt the blossomed vines,
> Of Men, of that machine supplied by thought
> To compass self-perception with, he sought
> By forcing half-himself - an insane pulse
> Of a god's blood, on clay it could convulse,
> Never transmute - on human sights and sounds,
> To watch the other half with; irksome bounds
> It ebbs from to its source, a fountain sealed
> Forever. Better sure be unrevealed
> Than part revealed: Sordello well or ill
> Is finished.[15]

At the end of Book III, Browning, musing on a ruined palace step in Venice, superimposes his own comment on the story of Sordello. Browning points out that in poems written by Eglamor, Sordello's predecessor, the whole being of the poet is involved, the poet and

the poem being completely merged:

> For he believed
> Himself achieving all to be achieved
> By singer - in such songs you find alone
> Completeness, judge the song and singer one,
> And either purpose answered, his in it
> Or its in him.[16]

In Sordello's poems, on the other hand, you are aware of the life beneath the poem, this life which is never completely expressed in the poem, which carries on before and after the pause for expression:

> The singer's proper life was 'neath
> The life his song exhibits, this a sheath
> To that; a passion and a knowledge far
> Transcending these, majestic as they are,
> Smouldered; his lay was but an episode
> In the bard's life.[17]

You are made aware of this life distinct from the poem by the flaws apparent in all of the poems - 'some slight weariness, some looking-off/Or start-away'.[18] Browning refers to one of Sordello's poems on Charlemagne, acclaimed widely except for one unfortunate line, and suggests what this one flaw means:

> "My life commenced before this work,"
> (So I interpret the significance
> Of the bard's start aside and look askance)
> "My life continues after."[19]

For poets like Sordello total self expression is always impossible, a poem being an artefact carved out of a flow of experience, never in itself embodying the totality of experience, and never, since not expressing all, perfect in itself.

Sordello is similar to many other heroes in nineteenth century literature in experiencing this clear consciousness of his own individuality and this sense of alienation from anything external -

an alienation frequently resulting in a form of paralysis or romantic ennui. Many critics have seen a near obsession with the subject/object antithesis as dominating the early nineteenth century literature:

> The premises on which any romantic poem is written are an acute consciousness of the isolated creating self on the one hand, and of a world unrelated and possibly uninterested and hostile, on the other; and the wish somehow to achieve a harmonious synthesis of the two.[20]

The conception of the solitary human acting out his drama in the arena of his own mind, as presented by Pater in his summary of our Renaissance legacy of self-consciousness, is implicit in Sordello:

> At first sight experience seems to bury us under a flood of external objects, pressing upon us with a sharp and importunate reality, calling us out of ourselves in a thousand forms of action. But when reflexion begins to act upon those objects they are dissipated under its influence; the cohesive force seems suspended like a trick of magic; each object is loosed into a group of impressions - colour, odour, texture - in the mind of the observer. And if we continue to dwell in thought on this world, not of objects in the solidity with which language invests them, but of impressions unstable, flickering, inconsistent, which burn, and are extinguished with our consciousness of them, it contracts still further; the whole scope of observation is dwarfed to the narrow chamber of the individual mind. Experience, already reduced to a swarm of impressions, is ringed round for each of us with that thick wall of personality through which no real voice has ever pierced on its way to us, or from us to that which we can only conjecture to be without. Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as solitary prisoner its own dream of a world.[21]

Sordello never leaves his dream world, except in his final moment of illumination, when he speaks out, long after the time for action has passed, in the accents of his author. Sordello, never achieving any real contact with the external world, considers his life as a poet

and politician as a means of display for his own individuality. The return to Goito and the source of his inner imaginative resources, symbolized by the font, represents a return to the only reality he ever experienced:

> And the font took them: let our laurels lie!
> Braid moonfern now with mystic trifoly
> Because once more Goito gets, once more,
> Sordello to itself! A dream is o'er,
> And the suspended life begins anew.[22]

Sordello's whole life is acted out in an inner chamber surrounded by a 'maze of corridors contrived for sin/ Dusk winding stairs, dim galleries'.[23]

b. Browning's Concept of Self Expression

While it is clear that Sordello represents a working out of ideas of importance to Browning, the ambivalent relation between the mask Sordello and its creator leaves in doubt the extent to which Browning shares Sordello's problems. However, many critics have detected an obvious autobiographical element in Sordello. Brooke, in his study of Browning's poetry, claims that the analogy between Sordello and Browning is reinforced by Browning's entrance into the poem and comment on the action at the end of Book III. He also points out that the spirit of curiosity and individuality forming the pattern of Sordello appears to belong more to the nineteenth than the thirteenth century.[24] Holmes in his essay on Sordello and Jung notes

that 'it is really most unusual that we should have in a purportedly historical epic so complete a revelation of what went on in the poet's mind during the time of composition' and that 'not only does Browning speak directly to the reader but also to his chief characters, admonishing, warning them what he intends to do with them.' Holmes, admitting the difficulty of knowing where Sordello and Browning's life diverge, avers that Sordello is strongly autobiographical. He supports Harriet Martineau's claim that in 1837 Browning, unable to finish Sordello, made a journey to Venice, a journey which itself appears to have been influential in solving both his and Sordello's problems.[25] However, for any conclusive evidence of the relation of Browning to his character Sordello, it seems necessary to examine a number of his poems.

A sense of the difficulties experienced by the individual in relating himself to the external world is a recurrent theme in Browning's poetry. In Pauline, Browning presents an aesthete, who is locked in by his own strong sense of individuality and acute feelings, who is incapable of projecting his internal experiences into the forms of art, or of relating himself in any way to anything external. Devane in his Browning Handbook claims that Browning had not yet freed himself from Shelley's conception of poetry as a confession, the expression of the mood or moods of the poet to form a poetic autobiography. Devane supports this point of view by quoting the following lines from the first edition -

> And then thou said'st a perfect bard was one
> Who shadowed out the stages of all life,
> And so thou badest me tell this my first stage -

and notes the transformation of these lines by the edition of 1888:

> a perfect bard was one
> Who chronicled the stages of all life.[26]

In spite of Browning's later presentation of this poem as dramatic, there seems little doubt that this first poem, this confession to an amorphous muse, represents Browning's own struggles in the direction of self expression. In view of this fact, its very similarity in subject matter and argument to that of Sordello presents convincing evidence of Sordello's basic importance and relevance to the author.

The poet of Pauline has difficulties which appear identical to those of Sordello. Just like Sordello, the poet is conscious of an inner power waiting to be released:

> I am made up of an intensest life,
> Of a most clear idea of consciousness
> Of self-distinct from all its qualities,
> From all affections, passions, feelings, powers;
> And thus far it exists, if tracked in all,
> But linked, in me, to self supremacy,
> Existing as a centre to all things,
> Most potent to create, and rule, and call
> Upon all things to minister to it;
> And to a principle of restlessness
> Which would be all, have, see, know, taste, feel, all.[27]

The poet, aflame with Platonic ideals, ventures into the real world but encounters only disillusion and frustration in his attempt to relate himself and his ideals to this world. The poet, alienated both from the world of men and from all ideals, experiences a sense of his own godhead, and at last feels free of his sense of failure at the incomplete expression of his moments of vision. Now he need

no longer try to communicate them, except perhaps to leave behind him a few souvenirs, his golden bough brought back from his internal pilgrimage:

> For a new thought sprang up how well it were,
> Discarding shadowy hope, to weave such lays
> As straight encircle men with praise and love,
> So, I should not die utterly, - should bring
> One branch from the gold forest, like the knight
> Of old tales, witnessing I had been there.[28]

Yet he is unable to imagine what he can create in any clear fashion, since the following of one path automatically shuts off others:

> I cannot chain my soul: it will not rest
> In its clay prison, this most narrow sphere:
> It has a strange impulse, tendency, desire,
> Which nowise I account for nor explain,
> But cannot stifle, being bound to trust
> All feelings equally, to hear all sides:
> How can my life indulge them? yet they live,
> Referring to some state of life unknown.[29]

The poet's inability to lend himself to any abstract ideal or even to understand the complexities of his own consciousness leads to growing despair and confusion. In the end, the poet affirms that he has spent too much time 'Draining soul's wine alone in the still night'[30] and although experiencing the same psychological and metaphysical problems as Sordello, perceives vaguely that there must be some solution and calls to his muse, Pauline, for help in awakening the 'unshaped images' which lie within his 'mind's cave'.[31]

This same conception of the enclosure of the mind is explored in Browning's later poetry through a variety of his dramatic personae. Cleon, who expresses the disenchantment of a world without revelation, notes the sense of alienation between soul and body, thought and act, in a world in which the word is not flesh. Considering the development

of man from the lower forms of being, he discovers that the reality of which man has become aware in his ascending progress is isolation and loss:

> This grew the only life, the pleasure-house,
> Watch-tower and treasure-fortress of the soul,
> Which whole surrounding flats of natural life
> Seemed only fit to yield subsistence to;
> A tower that crowns a country. But alas
> The soul now climbs it just to perish there!
> For thence we have discovered('tis no dream -
> We know this, which we had not else perceived)
> That there's a world of capability
> For joy, spread round about us, meant for us,
> Inviting us; and still the soul craves all,
> And still the flesh replies, "Take no jot more
> "Than ere thou climbst the tower to look abroad!
> "Nay, so much less, as that fatigue has brought
> "Deduction to it." We struggle - fain to enlarge
> Our bounded physical recipiency,
> Increase our power, supply fresh oil to life,
> Repair the waste of age and sickness: no,
> It skills not! life's inadequate to joy,
> As the soul sees joy, tempting life to take.
> .....[32]
> Most progress in most failure: Thou sayest well.

Prince Hohonstiel-Schwangau, the tyrant defending his violent guardianship of the status quo by the ironical use of the argument that to follow any one ideology or revolutionary idea cuts off all the other possibilities, vigorously affirms the superiority and separation of consciousness from the external world:

> Since what were ocean - mane and tail, to boot
> Mused I not here, how make thought thinkable?
> Start forth my stanza and astound the world!
> Back billows, to your insignificance!
> Deep, you are done with![33]

The affable Mr. Sludge, though dealing in a world of illusion and deception, never doubts that he knows the "real" world:

> My care is for myself;
> Myself am whole and sole reality
> Inside a raree-show and a market mob
> Gathered about it: that's the use of things.[34]

The hero of Fifine at the Fair, the Don Juan who collects women as a means of establishing his own identity, discovers only the fact that everything moves and the fact of his own consciousness of this movement. He appeals to his wife Elvire and the gypsy woman Fifine to help him find some centre of stability:

> Convince unreasonable me
> That I am, anyhow, a truth, although all else seem
> And be not: if I dream, at least I know I dream.
> The falsity, beside, is fleeting: I can stand
> Still, and let truth come back, - your steadying
> touch of hand
> Assists me to remain self-centred, fixed amid
> All on the move.[35]

This search for identity is both the meaning of this Don Juan's life and his defence of it:

> Alack, our life is lent,
> From first to last, the whole for this experiment
> Of proving what I say - that we ourselves are true![36]
>
> All false, all fleeting too! And nowhere things abide,
> And everywhere we strain that things should stay, - the one
> Truth, that ourselves are true![37]

The difficulty of expressing this complex consciousness in terms of language, an important theme in the early poetry, recurs again with striking emphasis in the later poetry. The most extreme view of the inadequacy of language is put forward by the Pope in the Ring and the Book, who claims that man opens his mouth only to lie:

> Therefore these filthy rags of speech, this coil
> Of statement, comment, query, and response,
> Tatters all too contaminate for use,
> Have no renewing.[38]

The speaker in Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau, whose moment of truth is expressed almost wholly in terms of false reasoning and self delusion, does formulate the difficulties of self expression in

terms which seem to reach beyond the confines of his own personal situation:

> Alack, one lies one's self
> Even in the stating that one's end was truth,
> Truth only, if one states as much in words!
> Give me the inner chamber of the soul
> For obvious easy argument! 'tis there
> One pits the silent truth against a lie -
> Truth which breaks shell a careless simple bird,
> Nor wants a gorget nor a beak filed fine,
> Steel spurs, and the whole armoury o' the tongue,
> To equalize the odds. But, do your best,
> Words have to come: and somehow words deflect
> as the best cannon ever rifled will.[39]

The superiority of music and painting to language as a means of expression is affirmed in many poems.[40] In Fifine at the Fair the difficulty of using words is expressed in terms familiar to modern readers. The superiority of music which records what other men feel only to forget is set beside the imprecision and reluctance of words:

> Words struggle with the weight
> So feebly of the False, thick element between
> Our soul, the True and Truth! which, but
> that intervene
> False shows of things, were reached as easily
> by thought
> Reducible to word, as now by yearnings
> wrought
> Up with thy fine free force, oh Music, that
> canst thrid,
> Electrically win a passage through the lid
> Of earthly sepulchre, our words may push
> against,
> Hardly transpierce as thou! Not dissipate,
> thou deign'st,
> So much as tricksily elude what words
> attempt
> To heave away, i' the mass, and let the soul,
> exempt
> From all vapory obstruction, view, in-
> stead
> Of glimmer underneath, a glory overhead.[41]

The external world presses in upon the speaker in its variety of ways and impells him to make yet another beginning:

> Well, out of all and each these nothings,
> comes — what came
> Often enough before, the something that
> would aim
> Once more at the old mark: the impulse to
> at last
> Succeed where hitherto was failure in the
> past,
> And yet again essay the adventure. Clearlier
> sings
> No bird to its couched corpse "Into the
> truth of things --
> Out of their falseness rise, and reach thou,
> and remain!'[42]

It appears from the evidence of these poems which range over most of Browning's lifetime that Sordello's particular problems with regard to self expression and communication in language were problems which were of vital concern to Browning himself. Further evidence in Browning's letters and prose would seem to indicate that he viewed the creative process in terms of this struggle for expression or realization in an aliem world of continual movement. As Duckworth has noted in his study, Browning, Background and Conflict,[43] the importance of total self expression to Browning is emphasized in a series of letters to Elizabeth Barrett, the sincerity of which there can be no reason to doubt. Browning indicates in these letters his dissatisfaction with the dramatic method because this method never allows him to express his total being in his own voice. In 1845, he writes to Elizabeth Barrett:

> Your poetry must be, cannot but be, infinitely more to me than mine to you -- for you do what I always wanted, hoped to do, and only seem now likely to do for the first time. You speak out, you -- I only make men and women speak -- give you truth broken into prismatic hues, and fear the pure white light, even if it is in me.[44]
>
> What I have printed gives no knowledge of me -- it evidences abilities of various kinds, if you will -- and a dramatic sympathy with certain modifications of passion -- that I think -- But I have never begun, even, what I hope I was born to begin and end -- 'R.B. a poem'. These scenes and song-scraps are such mere and very escapes of my inner power, which lives in me like the light in those crazy Mediterranean phares I have watched at sea, wherein, the light is ever revolving in a dark gallery, bright and alive, and only after a weary interval leaps out, for a moment, from the one narrow chink, and then goes on with the blind wall between it and you.[45]

Browning's conception of the meaning of total self expression is outlined in a passage on the subjective poet in his Essay on Shelley;

> Not with the combination of humanity in action, but with the primal elements of humanity he has to do; and he digs where he stands, -- preferring to seek them in his own soul as the nearest reflex of that absolute Mind, according to the intuitions of which he desires to perceive and speak. Such a poet does not deal habitually with the picturesque groupings and tempestuous tossings of the forest-trees, but with their roots and fibres naked to the chalk and stone. He does not paint pictures and hang them on the walls, but rather carries them on the retina of his own eyes: we must look deep into his human eyes, to see those pictures on them. He is rather a seer, accordingly, than a fashioner, and what he produces will be less a work than an effluence. That effluence cannot be easily considered in abstraction from his personality, -- being indeed the very radiance and aroma of his personality, projected from it but not separated.[46]

It is obvious that, in terms of this passage, 'R.B. a poem' was never written, but the view of the poet's task expressed here does much to explain the strange nature of Browning's "dramatic" poetry, in which a vital and complex humanity is presented, not in action, but as actors deprived of both their actions and ultimately their costume, exposing not only their own depths but the depths of their creator.

Browning felt his inability to pierce 'the blind wall' between himself and the external world, except through the intermediary of a persona, to be a sign of failure in carrying out his poetic aims. Viewed in terms of his own initial ideal, Browning's poems are poems whose subject is the poetic process. They represent his attempt to work out his own relation to the external world, his search for a unifying force which would explain and unite the complexities of his own consciousness and release his own voice. Browning may have considered The Ring and the Book his nearest possible approach to 'R.B. a poem', but The Ring and the Book remains a poem about a method of finding truth or a centre of objectivity, rather than the vision itself. In this sense, Childe Rolande to the Dark Tower Came seems a more complete expression of a poetic quest, doomed to failure by its very nature.

What is so frequently called Browning's psychological depth is in reality his study of the implications of this concept of the enclosed individual consciousness as he observed it in himself. Browning does not present psychological types of the universal profundity of Othello and Lear, but studies in motion of the peculiar characteristics of the individual in the modern world. Just as Browning initially felt himself to be a creature with unlimited potential but no clear sense of orientation in the external world, so his main protagonists have had certain roles thrust upon them by the external world, roles which are rarely considered by themselves as accurate projections of their own beings, their main struggle or crisis is usually occasioned by a threatened encroachment on, or need for assertion of, their

inner individual autonomy. Underlying all of Browning's persona, no matter what the surface external theme, lies an exploration of the whole nature of human isolation, the difficulty man experiences in attempting to achieve a lasting contact with any other person or with his environment. Many of Browning's personae are alike in their recognition of a core of dynamism that propels them, but rarely do they consider themselves directed towards other than artificially erected goals. As a result, the concept of time as progression, a period in which something is accomplished, is missing. Time is for Browning discontinuous, as in Pater[47], a single flash in which a lifetime is lived:

> Oh, we're sunk enough here, God knows!
> But not quite so sunk that moments
> Sure tho' seldome are denied us,
> When the spirit's true endowments
> Stand out plainly from its false ones,
> And apprise it if pursuing
> Of the right way or the wrong way,
> To its triumph or undoing.
>
> There are flashes struck from midnights,
> There are fire-flames noondays kindle,
> Whereby piled-up honours perish,
> Whereby swollen ambitions dwindle,
> While just this or that poor impulse
> Which for once had play unstifled,
> Seems the sole work of a lifetime
> That away the rest have trifled.[48]

It is these moments of illumination that find their expression in Browning's monologues -- a single moment in which the meaning of a character's life is both revealed and expressed and when communication with other human beings becomes possible -- after which he retreats again behind the blank wall of his own consciousness.

In spite of this reflection within the framework of his poetry of the problems he had considered earlier in Sordello, Browning found himself unable to accept the total implications of this enclosing of each individual in the frame of his own consciousness -- a single moment his window on the world. The whole progress of his poetry represents an intellectual attempt to find a system that would contain all of human individuality. The self-imprisoned Sordello experiences a feeling of infinite power within himself, but is unable to act effectively. Browning in his poetry transforms the very qualities which paralyzed Sordello into a dynamic carnival of activity. Man experiences striving in his soul and should objectify this striving by taking hold of these single moments of illumination that have been granted him and by utilizing them. For Pater it would seem impossible to construct any sort of objective system on the basis of these single moments:

> With this sense of the splendour of our experience and of its awful brevity, gathering all we are into one desperate effort to see and touch, we shall hardly have time to make theories about the things we see and touch.[49]

Browning, on the other hand, regards these moments as signposts leading to the right action and ultimate salvation. As Gingerich states in Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning, in Browning

> life is . . . an endless addition, extension and expansion, and the will is to exercise itself not in the way of restraint and self-control but in such a way as to attain the greatest possible gain; not negatively but positively, always positively.[50]

Browning finds in this striving itself proof of the unity of all of nature, each creature engaged in an evolutionary uphill struggle:

He dwells in all,
From life's minute beginnings up at last
To man -- the consummation of this sphere
Of being, the completion of this sphere
Of life.

Man's limitations are not cause for pessimism, but in themselves proof of a higher order --

dim fragments meant
To be united in some wondrous whole,
Imperfect qualities throughout creation,
Suggesting some one creature yet to make,
Some point where all those scattered rays should meet
Convergent in the faculties of man.[51]

For Browning, this enclosure of each human being in the prison of his own consciousness as personified by Sordello is a necessary part of the human condition, the only key being divine revelation.

It would appear to be one of the central paradoxes of Browning's poetry that, in spite of his distrust of discursive reasoning, he finds the solution to his aesthetic problems within the bounds of a metaphysical system. For no matter at what depth Browning's religious beliefs were held, by presenting these beliefs as central to his poetic statements, he has of necessity to present them as part of a logical system which pervades and animates his personae. The main criticism of Browning's poetry by modern poets is focussed on this tendency of Browning to move towards a poetry of statement rather than a poetry of revelation. Yeats's discussion of this question of religious belief in poetry with reference to Blake and Browning is typical of this criticism. For Blake, Yeats maintains,

mysticism was never <u>the substance of his poetry, only its machinery</u>.

> You need not be a believer in his mysticism to enjoy his poems . . . The substance of his poetry is himself, revolting and desiring . . . His mysticism was a make-believe, a sort of working hypothesis as good as another . . . I like a poem to have fine machinery, but if this machinery is made to appear anything more than that, the spell of the poetry is broken.
>
> Browning constantly makes his mystical beliefs an essential part of his poetry, thereby showing he did not know the true doctrine of poetry.
>
> Browning was not a great poet because he tended away from the true mood of the whole man into the false mood of the idea . . . Reading him I am not a free man, he shackles me all the time with logic and philosophy and opinion, he binds me to the ground with thorns not of flesh.[52]

Both Yeats and Pound tend to exaggerate the extent to which Browning attempts in his poetry to express abstract ideas by means of the language of prose statement. However, Yeats's comparison between Blake and Browning does emphasize a central weakness in Browning's poetry. At best, Browning, in his dramatic monologues, creates personae who have a complex independent existence as imaginative creations divorced from the strong base of personal belief and ideas underlying all of Browning's poetry. At its least satisfactory, Browning's poetry demands the reader to believe before he experiences.

Sordello's difficulties with regard to self expression, his inability to commit himself wholly to any particular path, and his dissatisfaction with language as a means of expressing his total self can thus be seen as problems which have a personal relevance to Browning, particularly in his early career. It is probably significant that, in his later poetry, those characters in whose mouths are placed the most definite discussions of these problems of self expression -- the speaker in Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau, Sludge the Medium, and

the hero of Fifine at the Fair -- are portrayed as unsympathetic characters. While it is obvious that a theory of knowledge, some explanation for the relation between word, thought and external object, must form the basis for any attempt at poetic expression, the mere questioning of these basic connections can be a danger to a poet, Donald Davie, in the first chapter of his study of syntax Articulate Energy, discusses the poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal, who, like Browning, deals in The Letter of Lord Chandos with these same problems, which he also projects through a persona -- in this case, an Elizabethan nobleman addressing a letter to Francis Bacon. After this work, von Hofmannsthal relinquishes any attempt to write lyrical poetry, confining himself to prose and drama.[53] While it appears that Browning's religious beliefs provided an adequate enough solution to the aesthetic problems posed in Sordello to permit him to continue functioning as a poet, there is evidence in his poetry to suggest that his solution was not an entirely satisfactory one. There are many paradoxes in Browning's poetry that appear to originate from his inability to resolve totally these particular aesthetic problems. Thus, his poetry is marked by a nervous erratic tension which contradicts the apparent dogmatic framework. He presents personae who are eager to expose themselves in speech, but who frequently express more through gesture and parenthesis than direct statement. Browning remains a poet, who, while explicitly desiring total self expression and averring the importance of statement in poetry, can communicate only through an indirect manner so complex that it is almost impossible to discover

what his attitude is towards any of the areas of his subject matter.

c. Pound's Concept of Self Expression

Pound, like Browning, considers the writing of poetry to be a continual process of self expression, by its very nature doomed to failure:

> In the "search for oneself", in the search for "sincere self expression", one gropes, one finds some seeming verity. One says "I am" this, that, or the other, and these words scarcely uttered one ceases to be that thing.[54]

The elusiveness of both the human consciousness and the external world which confronts it is explored in Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, which in many ways could be said to represent Pound's Sordello. Both poems explore problems of vital interest to the poets under the guise of a persona which is both the self and an anti-mask. As J.J. Espey has pointed out in his study of Mauberley, Pound, in the person of Mauberley, was rejecting 'a mask of what he feared to become as an artist by remaining in England'[55]. An inability to relate himself both to his external surroundings and to his artistic medium results in Mauberley's self destruction:

> Invitation, mere invitation to perceptivity
> Gradually led him to the isolation
> Which these presents place
> Under a more tolerant, perhaps, examination.
>
> By constant elimination
> The manifest universe
> Yielded an armour
> Against utter consternation,

A Minoan undulation,
See, we admit, amid ambrosial circumstances,
Strengthened him against
The discouraging doctrine of chances,

And his desire for survival,
Faint in the most strenuous moods,
Became an Olympian apathein
In the presence of selected perceptions.

A pale gold, in the aforesaid pattern,
The unexpected palms
Destroying certainly, the artist's urge,
Left him delighted with the imaginary
Audition of the phantasmal sea-surge,

Incapable of the least utterance or composition,
Emendation, conservation of the 'better tradition',
Refinement of medium, elimination of superfluities,
August sttraction or concentration.
Nothing, in brief, but maudlin confession,

Irresponse to human aggression,
Amid the precipitation, down-float
Of insubstantial manna,
Lifting the faint susurrus,
Of his subjective hosannah.[56]

Like Browning's Sordello, Mauberley is an exploration of the situation of poetry, contemporary to the poet, by means of the projection of a persona -- the complex subject released through a single point of view. In both poems, the view is directed on the ultimate significance of romantic subjectivity. In this passage in Mauberley, the mind as tabula rasa waiting for its perceptions has its transitory rewards in the natural defences total negation provides and in the odd moment of intuitive creative visition ('the pale gold'), but ultimately the mind destroys itself. In the essay on "Vorticism", which predates Mauberley by a few years, Pound examines two opposing conceptions of the mind's operations -- the mind as receiving and the mind as conceiving:

> There are two opposed ways of thinking of a man: firstly, you may think of him as that towards which perception moves, as the toy of circumstance, as the plastic substance receiving impressions; secondly, you may think of him as directing a certain fluid force against circumstance, as conceiving instead of merely reflecting and observing. One does not claim that one way is better than the other, one notes a diversity of the temperament. The two camps always exist. In the eighties there were symbolists opposed to impressionists, now you have vorticism, which is, roughly speaking, expressionism, neo-cubism and imagism gathered together in one camp and futurism in the other. Futurism is descended from impressionism. It is, in so far as it is an art movement, a kind of accelerated impressionism. It is a spreading, or surface art, as opposed to vorticism, which is intensive.[57]

The conception of the mind as a passive inward-turning faculty, and of poetry as the expression of the poet's own memories, feelings and ideas, Pound rejects, as is evident in Mauberley.

For Pound, the search for self expression is not a movement inward and backward in time, but a continual process of objectification of the self, achieved through a constant technical experimentation and effort. The mask and translation as used by Pound is part of an experimental process, the trying on of various roles and voices, with the aim of finding his own role and voice:

> Throughout the work of Pound there is what we might call a steady effort towards the synthetic construction of a style of speech. In each of the elements or strands there is something of Pound and something of some other, not further analysable; the strands go to make one rope, but the rope is not yet complete. And good translation like this is not merely translation, for the translator is giving the original through himself, and finding himself through the original.[58]

According to Pound, the artist who presents himself to his audience as either the hero-god or substitute sinner is denying the creative process. Central to poetic creation, Pound believes, is the disappearance of the poet:

> The first myths arose when a man walked sheer into 'nonsense', that is to say, when some very vivid and undeniable adventure befell him, and he told someone else who called him a liar. Thereupon, after bitter experience, perceiving that no one could understand what he meant when he said he 'turned into a tree' he made a myth -- a work of art that is -- an impersonal or objective story woven out of his own emotion, as the nearest equation that he was capable of putting into words. That story, perhaps, then gave rise to a weaker copy of his emotion in others, until there arose a cult, a company of people who could understand each other's nonsense about the gods.[59]

This theory is expressed in action in the poem The Tree:

> I stood still and was a tree amid the wood,
> Knowing the truth of things unseen before;
> Of Daphne and the laurel bow
> And that god-feasting couple old
> That grew elm-oak amid the world.
> 'Twas not until the gods had been
> Kindly entreated, and been brought within
> Unto the hearth of their heart's home
> That they might do this wonder thing;
> Nathless I have been a tree amid the wood
> And many a new thing understood
> That was rank folly to my head before.[60]

The subject of poetry still remains the self, but a self that is both denied and realized through a process of objectification.

The distance of such a conception of the poetic process from the poet's attitude towards himself and his poetry inherited by Browning is evident when we look at Pound's Paracelsus in Excelsis, in which Pound has concentrated the conception of the self basic to Browning's early heroes:

> 'Being no longer human, why should I
> Pretend humanity or don the frail attire?
> Men have I known and men, but never one
> Was grown so free an essence, or become
> So simply element as what I am.
> The mist goes from the mirror and I see.

> Behold! the world of forms is swept beneath --
> Turmoil grown visible beneath our peace,
> And we that are grown formless, rise above --
> Fluids intangible that have been men,
> We seem as statues round whose high-risen base
> Some over flowing river is run mad.
> In us alone the element of calm'.[61]

The distortion that concentration brings does not invalidate Pound's understanding of a basic part of Browning's conception of a self that has a precise entity. There seems to be built into the structure of this poem, beneath Pound's recognition of the irony of the human being trying to force his own resurrection, an element of admiration that is more than Browning's self admiration -- an admiration for an intellectual and emotional effort powerful enough to transform what became for so many others a philosophy of nihilism into a cry of assertion. The question that naturally arises here is why Pound, who believes just as sincerely as Browning that poetry is a matter of self expression, can reject Browning's use of the mask to reveal his own mind's operations, and can find both the origin of the creative process and his own poetic practice in a doctrine which denies the direct use of the poet's own experiences, thoughts and emotions.

> O my songs,
> Why do you look so eagerly and so curiously into people's faces,
> Will you find your lost dead among them?[62]

When dealing with a fact as basic to both poetry and a total culture as a theory of knowledge, there comes a point where the difference between the attitudes of two poets becomes largely a question of historical accident. As Maritain has pointed out in <u>Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry</u>, since the second half of the nineteenth century,

the act of writing poetry has become an act which is conscious of itself, no longer subject to the blind whims of a muse or of the fancy or imagination. The poet cannot coerce his muse but at least he tends to know what he is doing when he is under her influence. The origin of this "discovery" of the nature of the creative act lies in the romantic poets' exploration of their own interior world. The search for the self has gone so far down that it has eventually reached a still point of objectivity:

> The process of internalization through which human consciousness has passed from the concept of the Person to the very experience of subjectivity comes to fulfillment: it reaches the creative act itself. Now subjectivity is revealed, I mean as creative. At the same time and by the same token is also revealed the intuitive and entirely individualized, way through which subjectivity communes with the world in the creative act. While being set free, the basic need for self-expression quickens and makes specific the new relationship of the artist to Things. The inner meaning of Things is enigmatically grasped through the artist's Self, and both are manifested in the work together. This was the time when poetry became conscious of itself.[63]

The poetic vision itself has re-formed the world's split personality.

Basic to Pound's aesthetic theory is the belief that the mind can perceive the 'inner meaning' of external objects and that this meaning belongs to the objects and is in no way superimposed on them by the mind. This conception of the inter-relation of self and object is expressed by Pound in the image of the rose made by the magnet in the dust filings:

> The forma, the immortal concetto, the concept, the dynamic form which is like the rose-pattern driven into the dead iron filings by the magnet, not by material contact with the magnet itself, but separate from the magnet itself. Cut off by a layer of glass, the dust and filings rise and spring into order. Thus the forma, the concept rises from death.[64]

Pound's awareness of the historical background of his belief is recorded in the poem, The Tree, already quoted:

> 'Twas not until the gods had been
> Kindly entreated, and been brought within
> Unto the hearth of their heart's home
> That they might do this wonder thing.[65]

But Pound rejects the approach to this vision through the subjective, regarding the immersion of the self in external objects as the only way this vision can now be seen:

> Rest me with Chinese colours,
> For I think the glass is evil.
>
> II
>
> The wind moves about the wheat --
> With a silver crashing,
> A thin war of metal.
>
> I have known the golden disk,
> I have seen it melting above me,
> I have known the stone-bright place,
> The hall of clear colours.
>
> III
>
> O glass subtly evil, O confusion of colours!
> O light bound and bent in, O soul of the captive,
> Why am I warned? Why am I sent away?
> Why is your glitter full of curious mistrust?
> O glass subtle and cunning, O powdery gold!
> O filaments of amber, two faced iridescence![66]

Pound is especially interested in poetry where this immersion of the self in the intense focussing on the external object has taken place. The Chinese poet keeps his eye on the object, represents the object in its essential forms, and cannot help at the same time revealing himself. The Provençal and Tuscan poets were conscious of the reality of their relation to the external world, and were concerned with the precise expression in their poetry of their vision of this relation, not with the expression of their own personal activities and thoughts:

'Tis not a game that plays at mates and mating,
Provence knew;
'Tis not a game of barter, lands and houses,
Provence knew.

We who are wise beyond your dream of wisdom,
Drink our immortal moments; we 'pass through'.
We have gone forth beyond your bonds and borders,
Provence knew;
And all the tales of Oisin say but this:
That man doth pass the net of days and hours.
Where time is shrivelled down to time's seed corn
We of the Ever-living, in that light
Meet through our veils and whisper, and of love.

There is the subtler music, the clear light
Where time burns back about th'eternal embers.
We are not shut from all the thousand heavens:
Lo, there are many gods whom we have seen,
Folk of unearthly fashion, places splendid,
Bulwarks of beryl and of chrysoprase.
. . . . . .
If I have merged my soul, or utterly
Am solved and bound in, through aught here on earth,
There canst thou find me, O thou anxious thou,
Who call'st about my gates for some lost me;
I say my soul flowed back, became translucent.
Search not my lips, O love, let go my hands,
This thing that moves as man is no more mortal.
If thou hast seen my shade sans character,
If thou hast seen that mirror of all moments,
That glass to all things that o'ershadow it,
Call not that mirror me, for I have slipped
Your grasp, I have eluded.[67]

The objective sight of the poet, 'the solid, the last atom of force verging off into the first atom of matter'[68] can only be communicated through the image -- the poet's natural pigment. Pound believes that the mind does not basically contain ideas, but images of the concrete objects of the external world. The material of poetry is to be found not at the point where the mind appears to passively receive impressions and sensations of external objects, but at the point where the mind recreates its own picture from the facts it has received through sensation. In his essay on "Vorticism", Pound defines the one image poem in these terms:

> In a poem of this sort one is trying to record the precise instant when a thing outward and objective transforms itself, or darts into a thing inward and subjective.
>
> This particular form of consciousness has not been identified with impressionist art. I think it is worthy of attention.[69]

The Romantic poet attempting to retrace his steps to the point of sensation by recreating an external landscape and imposing his own emotions and ideas on it is writing only the beginning of a poem. The true poem would record, according to Pound, the internal landscape, the picture built up in the mind, which itself embodies both the sensations actually received from an infinite number of external landscapes perceived and the emotions of the perceiver.

The poet's task is to pierce the layer of subjective thinking and emotion which the mind has erected on its store of images, and represent these images which form its basic component. Pound accuses Browning of being too concerned with ideas, 'poor, two-dimensional-stuff':

> "Thought" as Browning understood it -- 'ideas' as the term is current, are poor two-dimensional stuff, a scant, scratch covering. "Damm ideas, anyhow". An idea is only an imperfect induction from fact.[70]

Nor are these images which are the true poetic material to be used as signs referring to ideas or as any part of an abstract system which moves beyond or apart from them:

> The image is the poet's pigment. The painter should use his colour because he sees it or feels it. I don't much care whether he is representative or non-representative. He should <u>depend</u>, of course, on the creative, not upon the mimetic or representational part of his work. It is the same in writing poems, the author must use his <u>image</u> because he sees it or feels it, <u>not</u> because he thinks he can use it to back up some creed or some system of ethics or economics.[71]

Also rejected is the use of images as part of the private internal logic of poetry:

> Imagism is not symbolism. The symbolists dealt in "association", that is, in a sort of allusion, almost of allegory. They degraded the symbol to the status of a word. They made it a form of metonymy. One can be grossly "symbolic", for example, by using the word "cross" to mean "trial". The symbolist's symbols have a fixed value, like numbers in arithmetic, like 1, 2 and 7. The imagiste's images have a variable significance, like the signs a, b and x in algebra. . . .
>
> The painters realize that what matters is form and colour, Musicians long ago learned that programme music was not the ultimate music. Almost anyone can realize that to use a symbol with an ascribed, or intended meaning is, usually, to produce very bad art. We all remember crowns, and crosses, and rainbows, and what not in atrociously mumbled colour.[72]

Pound also denies for poetry the reliance on archetypal symbols, the use of images which, as Yeats affirms, have a universal appeal within a culture because they are embedded in the racial subconscious. Pound believes the image should stride all cultural barriers and should be used in and for itself:

> I believe that the proper and perfect symbol is the natural object, that if a man use 'symbols' he must so use them that their symbolic function does not obtrude; so that a sense, and the poetic quality of the passage, is not lost to those who do not understand the symbol as such, to whom, for instance, a hawk is a hawk.[73]

Images are not signs that conceptual thinking has taken place, but invitations to conceive and think in an infinite number of ways:

> The image is not an idea. It is a radiant node or cluster; it is what I can, and must perforce, call a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing.[74]

Pound defines the image as 'that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time'[75] and unlike Browning's Sordello, he believes that it is possible to achieve an instantaneous presentation of perception in language. This is possible because the

image is not used as an illustration, but is the statement itself:

> All poetic language is the language of exploration. Since the beginning of bad writing, writers have used the images as ornaments. The point of imagism is that it does not use images as ornaments. The image is itself the speech. The image is the word beyond formulated language.[76]

The poetic vision arrives fully clad and it is the poet's task to find the concrete equivalent in language:

> Language is made out of concrete things. General expressions in non-concrete terms are a laziness: they are talk, not art, not creation. They are the reaction of things on the writer, not a creative act by the writer.[77]

Language is not, as Browning believed, inferior to the total perception that the mind is capable of, for language is in no sense a system of abstract symbols which codify reality:

> Language is not mere cabinet curio or museum exhibit. It does definitely function in all human life from the tribal state onward. You cannot govern without it . . . There are other means of direct human communication but they are all narrowly zoned to their specific departments, plastic directness, mathematical relations . . . The spoken idiom is not only a prime factor, but certainly one of the most potent, progressively so as any modality of civilization ages. Printed word or drum telegraph are neither without bearing on the aggregate life of the folk. As language becomes the most powerful instrument of perfidy, so language alone can riddle and cut through the meshes. Used to conceal meaning, used to blur meaning, to produce the complete and utter inferno of the past century . . . against which SOLELY a care for language, for accurate registration by language avails.[78]

Pound would be in agreement with modern anthropologists who "read" total cultures in the forms of their languages.

However conscious Pound is of the fact that language has an external reality -- that it is not just a mental construct evolved in a futile attempt to clarify the complexities of the mind's thinking, but a fact which in itself is the most conclusive proof that there is a connection between mind and matter -- Pound would never fall

in with those who maintain that language is the only reality. A random glance at any page of the Cantos may lead us to suppose that the Cantos is a purely verbal universe, a kind of apotheosis of symbolist poetry, or a magical acoustic world in the manner of Swinburne. T. S. Eliot's comments on Swinburne help to emphasize the fact that this is a false view of the Cantos:

> When you take to pieces any verse of Swinburne, you find always that the object was not there -- only the word . . . Language in a healthy state presents the object, is so close to the object that the two are identified.
>
> They are identified in the verse of Swinburne solely because the object has ceased to exist, because the meaning is merely the hallucination of meaning, because language, uprooted, has adapted itself to an independent life of atmospheric nourishment.[79]

The Cantos may be one vast construct of many languages, but the language is nourished by direct contact with external objects and has a meaning that moves beyond the area of language.

Pound has renewed his poetic language for this aim by careful study of poetic writing in which there is no divorce between word, object and thought. One of the most valuable sources of his new poetic language has been Chinese poetry. In Chinese poetry, Pound maintains, the poet is always of necessity conscious of the object, since the written character he uses is itself a picture of the object, or complex of objects it represents. Similarly, in Provençal and Tuscan poetry, the process of abstraction of language and idea from the object has not yet taken place:

> The best Egyptian sculpture is magnificent plastic; but its force comes from a non-plastic idea, i.e. the god is inside the statue . . .
>
> This sculpture with something inside, revives in the Quattrocento portrait bust. But the antecedents are in verbal manifestation . . .
>
> We appear to have lost the radiant world where one thought cuts through another with clean edge, a world of moving energies '*mezzo oscuro rade*', '*risplende in se perpetuale effecto*', magnetisms that take form, that are seen, or that border the visible, the matter of Dante's *paradiso*, the glass under water, the form that seems a form seen in a mirror, these realities perceptible to the sense, interacting, '*a lui si tiri*' untouched by the two maladies, the Hebrew disease, the Hindoo disease, fanaticisms and excess that produce Savonarola, his prohibition of bathing by women . . . Not the pagan worship of strength, nor the Greek perception of visual non-animate plastic, or plastic in which the being animate was not the main and principal quality, but this 'harmony in the sentience' or harmony of the sentient, where the thought has its demarcation, the substance its *virtu*, where stupid men have not reduced all 'energy' to unbounded undistinguished abstraction.[80]

This 'harmony of the sentient' was expressed, Pound claims, in an exact and precise language. Pound relates the loss of this dynamic world to the lack of care for exact terminology which appeared with the Renaissance:

> What the Renaissance gained in direct examination of natural phenomenon, it in part lost in losing the feel and desire for exact descriptive terms. I mean that the mediaeval mind had little but words to deal with and it was more careful in its definitions and verbiages.
>
> In depicting the motions of the 'human heart', the durability of the writing depends on the exactitude. It is the thing that is true and stays true that keeps fresh for the new reader.[81]

Pound's world of moving energies is not a world which has been fractured into compartments. The re-discovery of the "reality" of the external world through the knowledge of the mind's internal operations has made it possible for the modern poet to rebuild the

shattered lines of connection between word, thought and object. The mind is viewed not as imposing patterns on the external world but as finding in the external world patterns corresponding to ones in consciousness:

> Sunt lumina
> that the drama is wholly subjective
> stone knowing the form which the carver imparts it
> the stone knows the form.[82]

The word as image is the point of intersection between the outside world and the internal world of thought. Through language a fusion of object, emotion and thought can be achieved. It <u>is</u> possible to record the precise instant when 'a thing outward and objective transforms itself, or darts into a thing inward or subjective'[83]. The phantasmal sea surge is no longer only listened to:

> A fat moon rises lop-sided over the mountain
> The eyes, this time my world,
> But pass and look <u>from</u> mine
> between my lids
> sea, sky, and pool
> alternate
> pool, sky, sea.[84]

2. <u>The Difficulty of Communication</u>

> Will people accept them?
> (i.e. these songs).
> As a timorous wench from a centaur
> (or a centurion),
> Already they flee, howling in terror[85]. -- Ezra Pound

a. <u>Sordello</u>

In his early career, Sordello writes with one eye on the poem and the other on the audience. As a human being, he requires the recognition of his audience. As a poet, he is concerned with developing his poetic instrument. These two aims clash when he

develops a more complex style of character portrayal and language. He finds that his audience cannot adapt itself to his innovations. They cannot pierce through his presentation in order to extract the whole conception upon which the presentation is based. Sordello's friend Naddo tells him that poetry should be based on the common sense and common ideas of mankind. The poet should entertain his audience with its own reflection:

> Now, you're a bard, a bard past doubt,
> And no philosopher; why introduce
> Crochets like these? fine, surely, but no use
> In poetry -- which still must be, to strike,
> Based upon common sense; there's nothing like
> Appealing to our nature![86]

Sordello maintains that he cannot translate his poetry into terms which his audience can understand. As a poet, he is concerned with the representation of certain moments when experience is gathered up and illuminated. If he represents these moments, his audience will not find in his representation any echo of their own ideas. If he stops to translate these moments into his audience's terms, the moment will have disappeared. Sordello concludes that poetic development of necessity causes the poet to become incomprehensible to his audience. He himself is satisfied with the conception. It does not matter to him whether he communicates it or not. As for his audience, they are quite happy with the old forms of poetry. So Sordello writes a poem in the old style of Montford the Crusader. Here Sordello suffers an unexpected disappointment, when he discovers that the public, while liking the poem, never considers Sordello himself to be such a hero:

Then came
The world's revenge: their pleasure, now his aim
Merely, -- what was it? "Not to play the fool
So much as learn our lesson in your school!"
Replied the world. He found that, every time
He gained applause by any ballad-rhyme,
His auditory recognized no jot
As he intended, and, mistaking not
Him for his meanest hero, ne'er was dunce
Sufficient to believe him -- all, at once.
His will . . . conceive it caring for his will!
-- Mantuans, the main of them, admiring still
How a mere singer, ugly, stunted, weak,
Had Montford at completely (so to speak)
His fingers' ends; while past the praise-tide swept
To Montford, either's share distinctly kept:
The true meed for true merit![87]

Sordello, being able to satisfy neither his audience nor his own personal requirements as a poet, decides, when an opportunity for political power is presented to him, that he can better achieve total self-development in a life of active participation in the cause of his countrymen devastated by the Guelf-Ghibelline struggles. He dreams of resolving the inequalities of the masses in the new Rome, which he is going to help build. But Sordello falters when he realizes the great gulf between his imaginative vision of the new Rome and the actual fact:

"But all is changed the moment you descry
"Mankind as half yourself, -- then, fancy's trade
"Ends once and always: how may half evade
"The other half? men are found half of you.
"Out of a thousand helps, just one or two
"Can be accomplished presently: but flinch
"From these (as from the faulchion, raised an inch,
"Elys, described a couplet) and make proof
"Of fancy, -- then, while one half lolls aloof
"I' the vines, completing Rome to the tip-top--
"See if, for that, your other half will stop
"A tear being a smile! The rabble's woes,
"Ludicrous in their patience as they chose
"To sit about their town and quietly
"Be slaughtered.[88]

Sordello, still determined that his fate is now inevitably bound up with humanity, goes to present the warrior Taurello with his solution to the political struggle. Taurello's scorn of the troubadour trying to step out of his role as entertainer causes Sordello to see finally the true role of the poet. The poet, Sordello described as 'earth's essential king'[89]. Where he himself failed was in his endeavour to describe nature, instead of remoulding it. The true role of the poet is to be the spokesman of his age, not by echoing the common feelings of his age, but by fusing himself with the multitude, who are 'to be by him themselves made act/ Not watch Sordello acting each of them':[90]

> "Not there the kingship lay, he sees too late.
> "Those forms, unalterable first as last,
> "Proved him her copier, not the protoplast
> "Of nature: what would come of being free,
> "By action to exhibit tree for tree,
> "Bird, beast, for beast and bird, or prove earth bore
> "One veritable man or woman more?
> "Means to an end, such proofs are: what the end?
> "Let essence, whatsoe'er it be, extend--
> "Never contract. Already you include
> "The multitude; then let the multitude
> "Include yourself; and the result were new:
> "Themselves before, the multitude turn you.
> "This were to live and move and have, in them,
> "Your being, and secure a diadem.[91]

It is through such leaders that humanity is advanced. Deed is not separated from the word, for it is the song itself that in reality directs the act:

> "Thought is the soul of act, and, stage by stage,
> "Soul is from body still to disengage
> "As tending to a freedom which rejects
> "Such help and incorporeally affects
> "The world, producing deeds but not by deeds,
> "Swaying, in others, frames itself exceeds,

"Assigning them the simpler tasks it used
"To patiently perform till Song produced
"Acts, by thoughts only, forthe mind.[92]

Sordello perceives peotic development as the gradual disengagement of thought from the physical. In the first stage, the artist displays good and evil as simple abstractions, the artist himself being submerged:

"Myself, the while,
"As one of you, am witness, shrink or smile
"At my own showing![93]

The next stage represents man in action, in all his complexity of emotions and qualities, the poet of necessity having to present this view of man from a higher standpoint:

"Myself, implied
"Superior now, as, by the platform's side,
"I bade them do and suffer.[94]

At the highest stage, the poet speaks to a few of man's inmost life, in the forms of pure thought stripped of all external elements. The artist is responsible for pulling his audience up to his level at each stage, communication being possible because the poet finds his subject matter in the basic elements of humanity:

"How I rose,
"And how have you advanced! since evermore
"Yourselves effect what I was fain before
"Effect, what I supplied yourselves suggest,
"What I leave bare yourselves can now invest,
"How we attain to talk as brothers talk,
"In half-words, call things by half-names, no balk,
"From discontinuing old aids.[95]

Self-development is not sufficient since it cannot be communicated or utilized. Self-development can only be realized through a process of communication with a view to educating and initiating the audience.

This highest level Sordello is never fated to reach. His moment of illumination is interpreted by Taurello in Taurello's own frame of reference. As the final irony, Sordello is offered the temporal form of his spiritual role -- an opportunity to be a king in fact, not as an instrument to serve humanity but to promulgate the old absolutism. Triumphing over this temptation, Sordello is gradually disengaged both from life and the poem -- having accomplished little, but having been able finally to resolve his individualist's point of view in a new aim of service to humanity.

A similar conception of the poet's service to humanity has been presented earlier in the poem where Browning has made his own comment on the narrative. The poet is viewed as a prophet who has had a revelation which he must communicate, and who must be prepared to accept the fact that he may receive calumny rather than praise:

> --Remark, you wonder anyone needs choke
> With founts about! Potshere him, Gibeonites!
> While awkwardly enough your Moses smites
> The rock, though he forego his Promised Land
> Thereby, have Satan claim his carcass, and
> Figure as Metaphysic Poet . . . ah,
> Mark ye the dim first oozings? Meribah!
> Then, quaffing at the fount my courage gained,
> Recall -- not that I prompt ye -- who explained.[96]

Browning claims that there are three types of accomplishment in poetry:

> The office of ourselves, -- nor blind nor dumb,
> And seeing somewhat of man's state -- has been,
> For the worst of us, to say they so have seen;
> For the better, what it was they saw; the best
> Impart the gift of seeing to the rest.[97]

The highest class of poets unfold a deeper significance than ordinary man can perceive. The auditor admits this and trusts the poet's revelations when he cannot follow them. Browning admits that the power of insight is better if combined with action, but it is of vital importance that these 'Makers-see'[98] be diligent in performing their function.

b. Browning and His Audience

Sordello' dilemma, resulting from the conflict between his sense of his own autonomy and alienation from the external world, and his need to communicate with the external world, was a dilemma faced by most nineteenth century poets. Browning and his contemporaries had inherited a belief in the social efficacy of the poet, but the application of this belief in an eclectic contemporary world was becoming a difficult task. Browning found himself caught between his inherited idea of the poet's social role and the necessity of maintaining his personal autonomy. The Victorian philosophy of action demanded that the poet be the prophet and spokesman of his age. In an age of function and utility, the poet must find his own use. Art, just like science, which produced results which the Victorian could see, must be placed in its proper role -- which was naturally a power over the mind and by extension a power upholding certain moral standards. As Jerome Buckley in The Victorian Temper points out, the early Victorian aestheticians

> strove to relate the beautiful to some fixed pattern in the harmony of nature, to an unchanging truth beyond the immediate object of contemplation. If art was to mirror a larger totality, its function, they thought, must be at least implicitly "moral"; the picture or the poem, the play or the statue was to edify as well as to delight by its reflection of an immutable design.[99]

The poet's role was traditionally that of seer -- the one who sees more than the average man. He was considered to be the person with the key to the hidden meaning of the contemporary world, but this meaning was expected to be in accord with the prevailing temper and mores of the age. Many Victorian artists might claim to share with Carlyle the aim of being ' a bringer-back of men to reality'[100] or with Ruskin the desire to 'mirror a complete world with splendid objectivity',[101] but the art produced was frequently far from reality. Being unable to see the reflection of an immutable design in the world around him, the Victorian artist had the choice - either of escaping into an ideal imaginative world, or of evolving a philosophy which would provide the unifying force and the sense of moral enlargement which his audience desperately demanded.

Browning was living in an environment which made it difficult for the poet to ignore his audience. Browning witnessed the growth of cheap newspapers and magazines, circulating libraries and railway bookstalls. He was writing poetry in the shadow of the novel, a form which in England was becoming more and more directed towards mass purgation. Reading material concerned solely with entertainment was being provided for a greatly increased audience, and few nineteenth-century writers were free from a desire to compete for the market. In his early career, Browning, writing his defiantly erudite and allegedly obtuse poetry, was in danger of remaining in the obscurity which cloaked many minor Victorian poetic talents, unable to compete with the verbose spokesmen of the age. Browning must have received much advice from kind friends regarding the promotion of his poetic talents -- such as that contained in the following letter from Alfred

Domett:

> As regards your books, I have one first and last request to make or advice to give you. Do for heaven's sake try to be commonplace. Strain as much for it as weaker poets do against it. And always write for fools. Think of them as your audience, instead of the Sidneys and Marvells and Landors. Ask some one-- the dullest, ploddingest, acquaintance you have -- how he or she -- would have expressed your thought, and take his or her arrangement. Will you do this? I fear not. Yet I know that herein lies your truest course.[102]

But Browning declared himself impervious to any interest in nurturing an audience through the lowering of himself to its level:

> I can have but little doubt but that my writing has been, in the main, too hard for many I should have been pleased to communicate with; but I never designedly tried to puzzle people, as some of my critics have supposed. On the other hand, I never pretended to offer such literature as should be a substitute for a cigar, or a game of dominoes to an idle man. So perhaps, on the whole, I get my desserts and something over, -- not a crowd, but a few I value more.[103]
>
> As I began, so I shall end, taking my own course, pleasing myself or aiming at doing so, and thereby, I hope, pleasing God.[104]

This conception of his own poetic practice, as recorded in his letters, is in accord with the conception presented in Sordello of the poet as the seer, the one who sees more and communicates what he sees without reference to what his audience demands.

Such an artist, interested more in his revelation than in its effect on his audience, should presumably be in a position to ignore his audience -- to be thankful for the 'few' and unmindful of the 'crowd'. Yet Browning returns repeatedly in his poetry to this question of the poet's relation to his audience, frequently giving expression to a sense of antagonism towards his audience. Browning deplores the commercialization of art in his discussion of the early

Florentine painters in Old Pictures in Florence:

> They pass: for them the panel may thrill,
> The tempera grow alive and tinglish;
> Their pictures are left to the mercies still
> Of dealers and stealers, Jews and the English,
> Who, seeing mere money's worth in their prize,
> Will sell it to somebody calm as Zeno
> At naked High Art, and in ecstasies
> Before some clay-cold, vile Carlino![105]

In Popularity, Browning's theme is the rejection by an indifferent world of the ideal poet, the innovator who struggles to clarify reality:

> Cunning comes to pound and squeeze
> And clarify, -- refine to proof
> The liquor filtered by degrees,
> While the world stands aloof.[106]

In the same poem, Browning also speaks of the way in which the true poet's discovery is popularized and vulgarized by the world which seemed indifferent to it. Ironically, he points to the fact that the innovator himself derives no material benefit from this vulgarization:

> And there's the extract, flasked and fine,
> And priced and saleable at last!
> And Hobbs, Nobbs, Stokes and Nokes combine
> To paint the future from the past,
> Put blue into their line.
>
> Hobbs hints blue,-- straight he turtle eats:
> Nobbs prints blue,-- claret crowns his cup:
> Nokes outdares Stokes in azure feats,--
> Both gorge. Who fished the murex up?
> What porridge had John Keats?[107]

The subject matter of Aristophanes' Apology is again the relation of the poet to his audience -- presented in the form of a debate between the inebriated Aristophanes and his crowd of revelling followers, and Balaustion and her friends, who are mourning the death of Euripides. Euripides is presented as the isolated seer who renews

art in solitude; Aristophanes as the poet who offers a debased art for the amusement of the crowd. While many critics have noted Browning's obvious bias on the side of Euripides, it is Aristophanes who presents arguments, which, judging from their recurrence in Browning's poetry, were of vital interest to Browning. Aristophanes deplores the fact that when he refines his language, his work is rejected; whereas when he writes a play to meet his audience's terms, the result is wide acclamation, the audience ultimately forcing him to rewrite the same play again and again. The judgment falls in Euripides' favour but the question of the poet's relation to his own contemporary audience is left unanswered. Again in the "Epilogue" to the Pacchiarotto volume, Browning denounces those poets who write solely for the recognition of the audience, but in Pictor Ignotus, the inability of the artist to create a live tradition without the participation of an audience is revealed:

> These buy and sell our pictures, take and give;
> Count them for garniture and household-stuff,
> And where they live needs must our pictures live
> And see their faces, listen to their prate,
> Partakers of their daily pettiness.
> . . . . . .
>
> If at whiles
> My heart sinks, as monotonous I paint
> These endless cloisters and eternal aisles
> With the same series, Virgin, Babe and Saint,
> With the same cold calm beautiful regard,--
> At least no merchant traffics in my heart;
> The sanctuary's gloom at least shall ward
> Vain tongues from where my pictures stand apart.[108]

The audience falsifies and misuses the values of art, but the artist without an audience is forced to repeat monotonously patterns bearing no relation to life and making no demands on his technical resources.

Browning's difficulty in establishing the exact nature of his relation to his audience is reflected in both the subject matter and form of his poetry. Browning is preoccupied with the idea that every man, in order to communicate with other human beings, must assume some sort of role. Communication itself in our world seems to destroy the individual autonomy, of necessity causing the individual to betray himself through lies. Paracelsus bases his apologia on the fact that the world itself forces deceit on the individual:

> All quackery, all deceit; myself can laugh
> The first at it, if you desire: but still
> You know the obstacles which taught me tricks
> So foreign to my nature -- envy and hate,
> Blind opposition, brutal prejudice,
> Bald ignorance -- what wonder if I sunk
> To humour men the way they most approved?[109]

At each point where the crowds impinge on the destiny of Browning's protagonists, the protagonist appears to be forced to adopt a role in order to find a point of contact with the crowd. In The Return of the Druses, Djabal is forced by the demands and needs of the people to assume the role of the god-king they require. In A Soul's Tragedy, the modern intellectual Chiappino is forced into the imposture of king by the crowds. The poet Desforges-Maillard in The Two Poets of Croisic can only receive the acclaim of Paris by assuming the guise of a woman -- this acclaim which should be his due as a poet innovator.

Browning's own use of the dramatic monologue as a disguise seems to be the result of his search for some point of contact with his audience. This genre as developed by Browning is a genre built for audience participation. The audience is invited to share a revelation which is in reality a compromise ordered to suit poet,

audience and persona. In theory, the audience participates with Browning in a quest for the truth, carried out by a scientific method of exposure. In fact, the audience is carried along until an answer is revealed that fits into the already existing framework of Browning's thought. Browning's eclectic dynamism tends to sweep the reader along, but only to reach the still centre of Browning's own ideas. Yeats claims that 'Browning was always a companionable man, a sublime showman with a voice of titanic volume, sometimes incoherent, but always dominating in his energy and learning; evermore would he stand in the public eye'[110].

Browning shares with the earlier Romantics and the later aesthetes the view that the poet communicates a special kind of knowledge unobtainable by other means:

> Art -- which I may style the love of loving, rage
> Of knowing, seeing, feeling the absolute truth of things
> For truth's sake, whole and sole, not any good truth
> brings
> The knower, seer, feeler, beside, -- instinctive Art
> Must fumble for the whole, once fixing on a part
> However poor, surpass the fragment and aspire
> To reconstruct thereby the ultimate entire.
> Art, working with a will, discards the super-flux, --
> Contributes to defect, toils on till,--fiat lux,
> There's the restored, the prime, the individual type.[111]

The poet shares with the creative intelligence behind the world an ability to perceive the truth or centre of reality, the poet perceiving this reality in isolated recurring moments of illumination. Although such a view ultimately limits the range of poetry to the intuitional experience of the creating poet, Browning would reject the views of those who believe in art for art's sake, who focus on the moments as they pass, simply for the moment's sake. For Browning,

the artistic process could never end simply in perception and representation:

> I cannot feed on beauty for the sake,
> Of beauty only, nor can drink in balm
> From lovely objects for their loveliness;
> My nature cannot lose her first imprint;
> I still must hoard and heap and class all truths
> With one ulterior purpose: I must know![112]

And this knowledge released from the magic moment must be communicated:

> Ah, that brave
> Bounty of poets, the one royal race
> That ever was, or will be, in this world!
> They give no gift that bounds itself and ends
> I'the giving and taking: theirs so breeds
> I'the heart and soul o' the taker, so transmutes
> The man who only was a man before,
> That he grows godlike in his turn, can give--
> He also: share the poets' privilege,
> Brings forth new good, new beauty from the old.[113]

Although Browning shares with the romantics an aesthetic which emphasizes self expression rather than communication, he also shares with the Victorians a belief that poetry should not only reveal but should elevate, should lift man one more further step in his evolution. Pauline and Sordello represent in the core of Browning's poetry a rejection of self expression for itself, and a move towards a poetry of communication.

The truth which Browning desires to communicate to his audience does not take the form of ideals which are to be imprinted on his audience's mind. The representation of ideal forms in Greek art is described in Old Pictures of Florence as leading ultimately to the degradation of the audience, to the letting of art live for you:

So, you saw yourself as you wished you were,
  As you might have been, as you cannot be;
Earth here, rebuked by Olympus there:
  And grew content in your poor degree
With your little power, by those statues' godhead,
  And your little scope, by their eyes' full sway,
And your little grave, by their grace embodied,
  And your little date, by their forms that stay.

You would fain be kinglier, say, than I am?
  Even so, you will not sit like Theseus.
You would prove a model? The Son of Priam
  Has yet the advantage in arms' and knees' use.
You're wroth -- can you slay your snake like Apollo?
  You're grieved -- still Niobe's the grander!
You live -- there's the Racers' frieze to follow:
  You die -- there's the dying Alexander.

So, testing your weakness by their strength,
  Your meagre charms by their rounded beauty,
Measured by Art in your breadth and length,
  You learned -- to submit is a mortal's duty.[114]

For the artist, the repudiating of reality in favour of ideal forms leads to aridity. In Pippa Passes, the sculptor Jules, conceiving of his art in terms of forms representing ideals, has become self-enclosed in his own world of artistic creation:

Quite round, a cluster of mere hands and arms,
(Thrust in all senses, all ways, from all sides,
Only consenting at the branch's end
They strain toward) serves for frame to a sole face,
The Praiser's in the centre: who with eyes
Sightless, so bend they back to light inside
His brain where visionary forms throng up,
Sings, minding not that palpitating arch
Of hands and arms.[115]

For Browning, poetry must be concerned with the facts of human life in all its variety -- facts which are grasped intuitively and must be continually examined and tested for their veracity. The poetic world is a true world, not one derived deductively from fixed ideal forms, but a world seen through its many manifestations, the natures of which are grasped unexpectedly through a chance encounter, word or

gesture. In Old Pictures in Florence, Browning states that growth only came in art when eyes were turned inward and man became flesh, the artist examining the reality of the human in all its imperfections. The poet takes the crude facts of human life and refines them in a crucible in order to obtain gold, or truth -- a recurring image of the creative process in Browning's poetry. In The Ring and the Book, Browning claims to present the 'pure crude fact' as contained in the 'square old yellow book' found at random in a street bookstall:

> A book in shape but, really, pure crude fact
> Secreted from man's life when hearts beat hard,
> And brains, high-blooded, ticked two centuries since.
> Give it me back! The thing's restorative
> I' the touch and sight.[116]
>
> This is the bookful; thus far take the truth,
> The untempered gold, the fact untampered with,
> The mere ring-metal ere the ring be made![117]

The poet's creative intuition works upon the facts, making them more pliable for the purposes of art, the poem taking shape from something the poet adds which 'mixed up with the mass/Made it bear hammer and be firm to file'.[118] The poet acts as the purifier who removes the baser metals and lets the truth shine out clearly. Such an art, releasing through its pursuit of the particular the concepts implicit in facts, attains ultimately a unity of concept and fact:

> Art, -- wherein man nowise speaks to men,
> Only to mankind, -- Art may tell a truth
> Obliquely, do the thing shall breed the thought,
> Nor wrong the thought, missing the mediate word.
> So may you paint your picture, twice show truth,
> Beyond mere imagery on the wall,--
> So, note by note, bring music from your mind,
> Deeper than ever e'en Beethoven dived,--
> So with a book shall mean beyond the facts,
> Suffice the eye and save the soul beside.[119]

In spite of Browning's belief that the material of poetry is to be found not in generalized concepts but in the facts of sense experience, he retains his belief, as expressed in Sordello, that the poet must move beyond the particular to find the general concepts containing and illuminating the particular. The poet, initially perceiving this truth in its most particular forms, gradually moves beyond the area where this truth is expressed in the imagery of objects appealing to sense experience and moves to what Browning considers the highest area of poetry, pure thought disengaged from the particulars received through the senses -- to speak 'naked thoughts/ Instead of draping them in sights and sounds'.[120] In "Amphibion", the prologue to Fifine at the Fair, the endeavour of the poet is expressed in the image of the swimmer who attempts to rise from the earth:

> From worldly noise and dust,
> In the sphere which overbrims
> With passion and thought, -- why just
> Unable to fly, one swims!
> . . . . . .
> Emancipate through passion
> And thought, with sea for sky,
> We substitute, in a fashion,
> For heaven -- poetry.[121]

The image is amplified later in the same poem, where the nature of the true action is defined in terms of an escape from the real world to a world of ideal forms:

> Each experience proves
> Air -- the essential good, not sea, wherein who moves
> Must thence, in the act, escape, apart from will or wish.
> . . . . . .
> We must endure the false, no particle of which
> Do we acquaint us with, but up we mount a pitch
> Above it, find our hand reach truth, while hands explore
> The false below: so much while here we bathe -- no more.[122]

The artist, gazing upward, gathers with him a crowd who likewise strain upwards in an attempt to see what the artist sees:

> His work gone, another fills the gap,
> Serves the prime purpose so. Undoubtedly there spreads
> Building around, above, which makes men lift their heads
> To look at, or look through, or look -- for aught I care--
> Over: if only up, it is, not down, they stare,
> "Commencing with the skies", and not the pavement in the
> Square.[122]

Browning views art and life as perpetually interacting, the poet acting upon the audience to enlarge their awareness of the world around them and to direct them in right actions, these actions of the audience in its largest sense being the raw material of poetry. For Browning, art does have an effect -- a proposition explored from many frequently grotesque points of view in Browning's poetry. In How It Strikes a Contemporary, the observer poet literally becomes a spy and it is suggested that he has the secret service agent's power to dispose of disliked people. Slavery is avoided in Balaustion's Adventures because of the captors' eagerness to listen to the latest avant-garde poetry from Athens. Mr. Sludge, 'The Medium' is a distorted defence of the imagination put into action. He believes that he can win fame by fancies since fancies eventually become facts. Browning's poetry is continually directed upon the audience -- the unspeaking auditor who is drawn in to participate in the 'monologue' -- pleading and at times attempting to coerce the reader into acting, thinking and feeling.

> His chief influence . . . upon a reader is towards establishing a connection between the known order of things in which we live and move and that larger order of which it is a part. He plays upon the will, summoning it from lethargy to activity.[123]

Browning realizes that an audience is necessary to complete a work of art, but the demands of an audience increasingly nourished on sensationalism sometimes cause his vision of himself as a poet liberator to waver. He recognizes, along with Wordsworth, the fact

that the poet has to educate his own audience, and looks to the future for a just appreciation of what he has done:

> His clenched Hand shall unclose at last,
> I know, and let out all the beauty:
> My poet holds the Future fast,
> Accepts the coming ages' duty,
> Their Present for this Past.[124]

The Browning Society and the frequent dinner invitations may have been proof that he was recognized, that his poetry was having an effect, but obviously an effect based on what was at times total incomprehension was bound to be doubted. Browning's despair at his contemporary audience's inability to comprehend his poetry is given expression in argument, humour, petulance and even anger, but one of his most powerful expressions of the theme is almost hidden. In Part IV of Paracelsus, the poetic quest is viewed in terms of an Odyssey:

> Over the sea our galleys went,
> With cleaving prows in order brave,
> To a speeding wind and a bounding wave,
> A gallant armament.

The crew touches land, carrying a precious cargo of statues for a shrine. All day long they build the shrines for the statues:

> We sat together on the beach
> To sing because our task was done.
> When lo! what shouts and merry songs!
> What laughter all the distance stirs!
> A loaded raft with happy throngs
> Of gentle islanders!
> "Our isles are just at hand", they cried,
> "Like cloudlets faint in even sleeping;
> "Our temple-gates are opened wide,
> "Our olive-groves thick shade are keeping
> "For these majestic forms" -- they cried.
> Oh, then we awoke with sudden start
> From our deep dreams, and knew, too late,
> How bare the rock, how desolate,
> Which had received our precious freight:
> Yet we called out -- "Depart!
> "Our gifts, once given, must here abide.

"Our work is done; we have no heart
"To mar our work", -- we cried.[125]

c. Pound and His Audience

The commercialization of literary forms has become so prevalent in this century that the protest of the "serious" artist against spectator art is almost automatic:

> As for the "eyes of too ruthless public": damn their eyes. No art ever yet grew by looking into the eyes of the public, ruthless or otherwise. You can obliterate yourself and mirror God, Nature or Humanity but if you try to mirror yourself in the eyes of the public, woe be unto your art.[126]

The discrepancy between what the audience demands and what the artist has to offer has now become an accepted part of the artistic milieu:

> The 'age demanded' chiefly a mould in plaster,
> Made with no loss of time,
> A prose kinema, not, not assuredly, alabaster
> Of the 'sculpture' of rhyme.[127]

Mr. Nixon's advice to Mauberley echoes Naddo's advice to Sordello. The important difference is that now in the first place it is wise to please the reviewers since they are the only people in contact with the reading public:

> In the cream gilded cabin of his steam yacht
> Mr. Nixon advised me kindly, to advance with fewer
> Dangers of delay. "Consider
> Carefully the reviewer.
> . . . . . .
> 'I never mentioned a man but with the view
> Of selling my own works.
> The tip's a good one, as for literature
> It gives no man a sinecure.
>
> 'And no one knows, at sight, a masterpiece,
> And give up verse, my boy,
> There's nothing in it.
> . . . . . .

> Likewise a friend of Blougram's once advised me:
> Don't kick against the pricks,
> Accept opinion, The 'Nineties' tried your game
> And died, there's nothing in it.[128]

In his early poetry, Pound approaches the question of the poet's relation to his audience from many points of view -- in a manner similar to Browning's. In Tenzone, Pound gives expression to his contempt for the "average" audience. He asserts, however, that his world is not a private world but a world which he can make intelligible -- at least to his fellow artists:

> Will people accept them?
> (i.e. these songs),
> As a timorous wench from a centaur
> (or a centurion),
> Already they flee, howling in terror.
>
> Will they be touched by the versimilitudes?
> Their virgin stupidity is untemptable.
> I beg you, my friendly critics,
> Do not set about to procure me an audience.
>
> I mate with my free kind upon the crags;
> the hidden recesses
> Have heard the echo of my heels,
> in the cool light,
> in the darkness.[129]

A similar sense of the artist's essential solitude, his inability to communicate except when the single moments of vision release his powers of expression, and his nostalgic longing for an audience of equals, is presented in In Durance. The subject matter and imagery of this poem seem reminiscent of Browning -- an impression fortified by the quotation from Browning's Pictor Ignotus:

> I am homesick after mine own kind,
> Oh I know that there are folk about me, friendly faces,
> But I am homesick after mine own kind.

'These sell our pictures'! Oh well,
They reach me not, touch me some edge or that,
But reach me not and all my life's become
One flame, that reaches not beyond
My heart's own hearth,
Or hides among the ashes there for thee.
'Thee'? Oh, 'Thee' is who cometh first
Out of mine own soul-kin,
For I am homesick after mine own kind
And ordinary people touch me not.
. . . . . .
Ye, that hide
As I hide most the while
And burst forth to the windows only whiles or whiles
For love, or hope, or beauty or for power,
Then smoulder, with the lids half closed
And are untouched by the echoes of the world.

Oh, ye, my fellows: with the seas between us some be;
Purple and sapphire for the silver shafts
Of sun and spray all shattered at the bows;
And some the hills hold off,
The little hills to east of us, though here we
Have damp and plain to be our shutting in.

And yet my soul sings "Up!" and we are one.
Yea, thou, and Thou, and THOU, and all my kin
To whom my breast and arms are ever warm,
For that I love ye as the wind the trees.[130]

The ideas that the poet must appeal to the exceptional and look to the future for complete recognition occurs in Pound's poetry. In Famam Librosque Cano, a monologue in the manner of Browning's, the poet visualizes the audience of one he will have some time in the future. In Salutation the Second, he expresses the plight of the artist who is always ahead of his contemporaries:

You were praised, my books,
because I had just come from the country:
I was twenty years behind the times
so you found an audience ready.
I do not disown you,
do not disown your progeny.

Here they stand without quaint devices,
Here they are with nothing archaic about them,
Observe the irritation in general:
'Is this', they say, 'the nonsense,
that we expect of poets?'
'Where is the Picturesque?'
'Where is the vertigo of emotions?'
'No! his first work was the best.'
Poor dear! he has lost his illusions. [131]

But along with this sense of awareness of the poet's solitude is a growing realization of the artist's responsibility and commitment to his own social environment. A series of poems in Lustra accounces that it is the poet's task to rejuvenate and liberate:

Here are your bells and confetti,
Go, Rejuvenate things!
Rejuvenate even 'The Spectator'.
Go! and make cat calls![132]

Go, my songs, to the lonely and the unsatisfied,
Go, also to the nerve-racked, go to the enslaved-by-convention,
Bear to them my contempt for their oppressors.
Go as a great wave of cool water,
Bear my contempt of oppressors.[133]

Come, my songs,
Let us take arms against this sea of stupidities--
Beginning with Mumpodorus,
And against this sea of vulgarities --
Beginning with Nimmim;
And against this sea of imbeciles --
All the Bulmenian literati.[134]

The poet's job is to liberate, but he can only have an effect against the 'sea of stupidities' not by just speaking out but by constantly speaking. In The Rest, he sympathizes with the artist he has left behind in the United States --

Lovers of beauty, starved,
Thwarted with systems,
Helpless against the control;

You who cannot wear yourselves out
By persisting to successes,
You who can only speak,
Who cannot steel yourselves into reiteration.[135]

Pound's final rejection of any sort of theory that implies art's detachment or isolation from the contemporary world is recorded in Mauberley, in his version of the Pictor Ignotus:

> Beneath the sagging roof
> The stylist has taken shelter,
> Unpaid, uncelebrated,
> At last from the world's welter.
>
> Nature receives him;
> With a placid and uneducated mistress
> He exercises his talents
> And the soil meets his distress.
>
> The havens from sophistications and contentions
> Leaks through its thatch;
> He offers succulent cooking;
> The door has a creaking latch.[136]

Although in his early poetry Pound expresses his sense of alienation from his audience, he tends even there to accept his audience as a fact. He refuses to make concessions to his audience's demand for a story or ideas or stock imagery, assuming that he does have an audience with the ability to understand his poetry, even if he does know all of these readers personally:

> I join these words for four people,
> Some others may overhear them,
> Oh world, I am sorry for you,
> You do not know these four people.[137]

He objects to Eliot's self-admitted concessions to his audience:

> [Eliot's] contempt for his readers has always been much greater than mine, by which I would indicate that I quite often write as if I expected my reader to use his intelligence, and count on its being fairly strong, whereas Mr. Eliot, after enduring decennial fogs in Britain practically always writes as if for very feeble and brittle mentalities, from whom he can expect neither resilience nor any faculty for seeing the main import instead of the details or surfaces.[138]

Pound regards all art as based not on the expression of the moments of vision of extraordinary human beings who perceive more than or differently from their fellow human beings, but on the communication of facts relating to human experience by individuals who have developed the means of communicating experiences common to their contemporaries and the whole human race -- a change in emphasis basically responsible for the change from a poetry of statement to a poetry in which statement is inseparable from technique. According to Pound's theory of the origin of art, the first art made its appearance not just because someone experienced something extraordinary, but because he found a way of communicating the peculiar emotion which the original experience evoked in him:

> The whole thing is an evolution. In the beginning simple words were enough: Food; water; fire. Both prose and poetry are but an extension of language. Man desires to communicate with his fellows. He desires an ever increasingly complicated communication. Gesture serves up to a point. Symbols may serve. When you desire something not present to the eye or when you desire to communicate ideas, you must have recourse to speech. Gradually you wish to communicate something less bare and ambiguous than ideas. You wish to communicate an idea and its modifications, an idea and a crowd of its effects, atmospheres, contradictions. You wish to question whether a certain formula works in every case, or in what per cent of cases, etc., etc., etc., you get the Henry James novel.
>
> You wish to communicate an idea and its concomitant emotions, or an emotion and its concomitant ideas, or a sensation and its derivative emotions, or an impression that is emotive . . . You begin with the yeowl and the bark, and you develop into the dance and into music, and into music with words, and finally into words with a vague adumbration of music, words suggestive of music, words measured, or words in a rhythm that preserves some accurate truth of the emotive impression, or of the sheer character of the fostering or parental emotion.

> When this rhythm, or when the vowel and consonantal melody of sequence seems truly to bear the trace of emotion which the poem . . . is intended to communicate, we say that this part of the work is good.[139]

Basic to Pound's aesthetics is the view that art communicates directly, that the work of art acts upon the spectator to produce in the latter an emotion similar to the emotion aroused in the poet by the original experience which has been transformed into art:

> The 'prose', the words and their sense must be such as fit the emotion. Or, from the other side, ideas, or fragments of ideas, the emotion and concomitant emotions of this 'Intellectual and Emotional Complex' . . . must be in harmony, they must form an organism, they must be an oak sprung from an acorn.[140]

What this poetry communicates are facts about human experience, ideas and emotions. Art, Pound emphasizes, is an area of human endeavour that is as precise in its procedures, and as factual in its presentation as any of the sciences. Pound's scientific method is not the mediaeval deductive method but what he calls the ideogramic method which consists of the examining of fact and the eliciting of conclusions always with reference to the facts. The poetic enterprise is just this attempt to get at the facts -- representing a continual examination and juxtaposition of facts for the sake of communicating knowledge:

> The ideogramic method consists of presenting one facet and then another until at some point one gets off the dead and desensitized surface of the reader's mind, onto a part that will register.[141]

What is communicated is not an abstract system of ideas:

> A narrative is all right so long as the narrator sticks to words as simple as dog, horse, and sunset. His communication ceases almost entirely when he writes down "good", "evil" and "proper".[142]

The Cantos present not a system of ideas, but a series of composite images, ideas in action, of the cultural periods and figures that Pound feels important for the renewing of our culture. These ideas in action appear in their original environment, fade into one another and recur in a different context, with all the confusion and intensity of lived experience, and the reader is presumably left to put his own interpretation upon the facts.

Pound considers the artist to have a serious function in society:

> It appears to me quite tenable that the function of literature as a generated prize-worthy force is precisely that it does incite humanity to continue living; that it eases the mind of strain; and feeds it, I mean definitely as nutrition of impulse.[143]
>
> Artists are the antennae of the race . . . A nation's writers are the voltometers and steam-guages of that nation's intellectual life. They are the registering instruments, and if they falsify their reports there is no measure to the harm that they can do.[143]

The periods of history that interest Pound are those in which the artist has a dynamic part in contemporary life and action. In his essay on "The Troubadours -- their Sorts and Conditions", he notes that this period was marked by an interlocking relation between the poet and his audience:

> No student of the period can doubt that the involved forms, and the veiled meanings in the 'trobar clus', grew out of living conditions, and that these songs played a very real part in love intrigue and in the intrigue preceding warfare.[145]

This art was vital, a part of the whole society, Pound maintains, because of the precision with which the artist represented his environment. The loss of the precision in use of words in the Renaissance, the disappearance of a clearly articulated language, broke the contact between reader and poet. Similarly, Pound praises certain

periods of Chinese history such as the period of Confucius, in which the individual is merged with the society in a unity based, Pound believes, on exactness of terminology:

> If the terminology be not exact, if it fit not the thing, the governmental instructions will not be explicit, if the instructions aren't clear and the names don't fit, you cannot conduct business properly.
>
> If business is not properly run, the rites and music be not honoured, penalties and punishments will not achieve their intended effects, if penalties and punishments do not produce equity and justice, the people won't know where to put their feet or what to lay hold of or to whom they should stretch out their hands.[146]

Browning tended to conceive of his mission in terms of individuals. For Pound, the artist's mission is directly concerned with the whole civilization. The function of literature in the state is

> not the coercing or emotionally persuading, or bullying or suppressing people into the acceptance of any one set or any six sets of opinions as opposed to any other set or half dozen sets of opinions.
>
> It has to do with the clarity and vigour of 'any and every' thought and opinion. It has to do with maintaining the very cleanliness of the tools, the health of the very matter of thought itself. Save in the rare and limited instances of invention in the plastic arts, or in mathematics, the individual cannot think and communicate his thoughts, the governor and legislator cannot act effectively or frame his laws, without words, and the solidity and validity of these words is in the care of the damned and despised *litterati*. When their work goes rotten -- by that I do not mean when they express indecorous thoughts -- but when their very medium, the very essence of their work, the application of word to thing goes rotten, i.e. becomes slushy and inexact, or excessive or bloated, the whole machinery of social and of individual thought and order goes to pot. This is a lesson of history and a lesson not yet half learned.[147]

This lesson of history is both the subject matter and technique of the *Cantos*.

II

THE MASK

1. Introduction

The modern preoccupation with disrobing public personalities has been accompanied by an insistent search for private confessions in art forms. This concern, related as it appears to be to the process of psychoanalysis, has led to an emphasis on the role of the public mask both in social relations and in art. Valéry, writing on Leonardo da Vinci, claims that

> each person being a sport of nature . . . the most beautiful purpose and even the most learned thought of this recreated creature inevitably recalls his origin. His activities are always relative, his masterpieces are fortuitous. He thinks mortally, individually, by fits and starts; and he finds the best of his ideas in casual and secret circumstances which he refrains from making public. Besides, he is not sure of being positively some one; he disguises and denies, more easily than he affirms, himself. Drawing from his own inconsistency some strength and much vanity, he puts his most cherished moments into fictions. He lives by romance, sees himself in a thousand roles . . . His hero is never himself.[1]

The recognition of the important part that the mask plays in everyone's life has contributed to the growing interest in what the artist did not say, or did not intend to reveal. An artist is valued by the number of psychotic tendencies his mask is thought to conceal. His popularity increases as his art can be explained by disturbances rooted in the unconscious -- the democratic substratum of individual consciousness. As a

counteraction or defensive strategy against the "democratizing" activity of the literary analyst[2], the serious artist has been striving for objectivity both by complex techniques, and by artificial means, such as the destroying of letters and conflicting evidence. A role is created and assumed artificially.

Indirectness in approach to ideas in poetry has always been considered an advantage, but the loss of a common base of knowledge linking poet and reader and the tendency to narrow the subject matter of poetry to the individual mind has made it necessary for the poet to search for a state of objectivity through the development of technical means alone. The subjectivity of the romantics having found its natural end on the analyst's couch, the poet has had to find means of objectifying self analysis. He has left behind the romanticist interest in his own personality enclosed in its own emotional framework, and has become interested in his mind as receptacle and reflector of the external world. The very complexity of this external world acting on a mind perpetually in flight has made it impossible for the poet to adopt any simple persona -- the detached observer, the spokesman of the age, the rebel antagonist. In view of this, the dramatic monologue -- a technique by which the poet attains self-realization in an objective form through a process of identification with successive states of mind -- can be seen as the crucial poetic form in modern poetry. The claim for Browning's direct relation to twentieth-century poetry rests most strongly on his use of the dramatic monologue. Pound states that

> the most interesting poems in Victorian English are Browning's Men and Women, or, if that statement is too absolute, let me contend that the form of these poems is the most vital form of that period of English, and that poems written in that form are the least like each other in content . . . Since Browning there have been few good poems of this sort. Mr. Eliot has made two notable additions to the list.[3]

The vitality of the dramatic monologue for this century has its source in the fact that, as a poetic form in action, it satisfies more of the demands being placed on artistic forms. Much of the poetic experimentation of the last century and a half has been directed towards finding the means of giving a complex subject matter a point of focus through technical means, rather than through a superimposed structure built upon the author's point of view, or some experience or system of ideas believed common to poet and audience. This single point of focus is necessary not only for clarity of expression, but to embody the aesthetic moment -- the religious-aesthetic conception of the single moment of perception which is both movement and stillness. The romantic poets had developed a technique of organizing their subject matter by seizing an external scene and using it as a filter through which could pass a complex of emotions, free from time and from any sense of linear arrangement. The technique of the dramatic monologue is directed towards the same end -- the filtering through a single persona of a whole complex of time and space relations. The use of the persona rather than an external scene as the focal point has certain obvious advantages. It eliminates the discursive time lapse while the scene is delineated and the occasional laborious transition from image to reflection. The personae are not figures awkwardly set in a background and held static while the surrounding details are delineated.

The personae, aptly described as figures in a mirror, carry with them their own background, and can change with the rapidity of images in a mirror. The figure appears fully gowned, and there is no pause while he is set in motion, as in the following examples from Browning and Pound:

> I am poor brother Lippo, by your leave!
> You need not clap your torches to my face.
> Zooks, what's to blame? You think you see a monk![4]--
> Fra Lippo Lippi

> Bah! I have sung women in three cities,
> But it is all the same;
> And I will sing of the sun.[5]-- Cino

Both Pound and Browning conceive of the human consciousness as a vital organism in perpetual movement, in Browning operating in an environment which tends to oppose the dynamism of the striving individual; in Pound, forming and re-forming in an environment as dynamic and changing as itself. The drama shaped by the Renaissance conception of development in clock time is an inadequate form for the expression of this conception. Pound and Browning are interested in the point at which the external world becomes the internal universe of the persona, not in character as revealed through action:

> To me, the short so-called dramatic lyric -- at any rate the sort of thing I do -- is the poetic part of a drama the rest of which (to me the prose part) is left to the reader's imagination or implied or set in a short note. I catch the character I happen to be interested in at the moment he interests me, usually a moment of song, self-analysis, or sudden understanding or revelation. And the rest of the play would bore me and presumably the reader.[6]

2. The Mask as Disguise

> And what I gazed upon was a prodigious Fair,
> Concourse immense of men and women, crowned or casqued,
> Turbaned or tiar'd, wreathed, plumed, hatted or wigged, but masked --
> Always masked, - - only, how?[7] -- Robert Browning, Fifine at the Fair

Although Browning's development of the dramatic monologue indicated the direction for future innovators, the purpose for which Browning used the dramatic monologue tended to differ from that of Pound, Eliot and Joyce. Browning was interested more in expressing his own attitudes and personality than in presenting a realistic portrayal of his environment. Browning was led to his development of the dramatic monologue form because he found it necessary to have an objective vehicle for his unconventional ideas. The mask was assumed for the purpose of communication, and changed to meet the demands of Browning's dialogue with the self from all points of view.

Browning conceived primarily of the mask as disguise -- a conception which necessarily implies the existence of something definite to be disguised. Browning had a clearly defined sense of his own individuality, of himself as a thinking, feeling being, who comes in contact with a complex range of experience but remains intrinsically himself and no other. In addition, he believed in an ultimate truth which could be approached through the moments of illumination of the individual-- a belief which gave his own ideas and feelings divine sanction. His own voice must be heard.

But, as is apparent in Pauline and in his letters to Elizabeth Barrett, Browning recognized in himself in addition to this clearly defined sense of individuality, a consciousness that was perpetually in flight. He was also aware of a sharp discrepancy between the inner self with which he was in contact, and his social role:

> To be grand in a simile, for every poor speck of a Vesuvius or a Stromboli in my microscosm, there are huge layers of ice and pits of black cold water -- and I make the most of my two or three fire eyes, because I know by experience, alas, how these tend to extinction-- and the ice grows and grows -- still this last is true part of me, most characteristic part, best part perhaps . . . Still, I am utterly unused, of these late years particularly, to dream of communicating anything about that to another person (all my writings are purely dramatic as I am always anxious to say) that when I make never so little an attempt, no wonder if I bungle notably -- 'language', too, is an organ that never studded this heavy head of mine . . . I, too, who have been at such pains to acquire the reputation I enjoy in the world -- and who dine, and wine, and dance and enhance the company's pleasure till they make me ill and I keep house, as of late. Mr. Kenyon . . . says my common sense strikes him, and its contrast with my muddy metaphysical poetry![8]

He had attempted to reproduce the problems of this complex secret self in the poem Pauline, but John Stuart Mill's description of the author as 'possessed with a more intense and morbid self consciousness than I ever knew in any sane human being'[9] humiliated Browning. He wrote in his copy of the poem: 'Only this crab remains of the shapely tree of life in this Fool's paradise of mine'[10]. His dream of expressing totally his own individuality has had to be relinquished. From this point, Browning affirmed objectivity as his poetic practice:

> From the first I notified the poems were each and all -- afterward an exception or two -- purely dramatic, with no sort of attempt at esoteric meaning, moreover, besides the self display.[11]

A conflict is evident in Browning between his desire to express himself in "R.B. a poem" and at the same time a fear of exposure of himself. He very carefully destroyed during his lifetime correspondence that tended to conflict with the picture he desired his contemporaries to have of Mr. Browning, the poet. When one of his letters to Leigh Hunt was published, Browning wrote:

> There's nothing in my letter I care about except the indecent nature of the exposure; its just as if, being at my toilette, some clownish person chose to throw the bedroom door wide.[12]

There seems involved in Browning's examination of points of view from a variety of angles a desire for escape or withdrawal. This same desire for withdrawal is also apparent in Browning's technique -- in the flippant manner or ironic metres used when he does speak in his own voice, and in his imagery, as in Pauline, where he represents Eden as a place where one can hide.

Browning's interest in exploring his own personality and the impossibility of his dealing with it directly in artistic forms made it necessary for him to assume some sort of guise. The projection of his ideas into the outward form of the persona and the subsequent disrobing of them enabled him to analyze his own ego. Hence his interest in the persona's own attitude to his role, apparent in many of his poems, as in the following passage from Mr. Sludge, "The Medium":

> Why, here's the Golden Age, old Paradise
> Or New Eutopia! Here's true life indeed,
> And the world well won now, yours for the
> first time!

And all this might be, may be, and with good help
Of a little lying shall be: So Sludge lies!
Why, he's at worst your poet who sings how Greeks
That never were, in Troy which never was,
Did this or the other impossible great thing!
. . . . . .
Sludge does more than they
And acts the books they write: the more his praise![13]

Don Juan's discussion in Fifine at the Fair of the discrepancy between appearance and reality contains an apt description of Browning's own artistic method:

I glut
My hunger both to be and know the thing I am,
By contrast with the thing I am not; so through sham
And outside, I arrive at inmost real, probe
And prove how the nude form obtained the checkered
robe.[14]

In the dramatic monologue, Browning found a form which not only satisfied his need for an objective method of expressing his own personality and concerns, but a form which itself seemed to echo his philosophical conception of the human personality and its environment. Browning regards the human soul as imprisoned, folded up in a maze of intricate exteriors, its true nature, although approachable from any variety of angles, emerging only through difficulty and usually by accident:

There is an inmost centre in us all,
Where truth abides in fulness;
. . . . . .
and to KNOW
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,
Then in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without.[15]

Browning, in his monologues, projects personae who reveal their own weaknesses, prejudices and self deceptions. But the revelation of the 'inmost centre' is indirectly effected through the gradations of tone and diction, and the presentation of gesture as implicit in speech.

For example, the measured casualness in tone and action of the urbane Bishop Blougram is communicated through the logical framework of argument within the poem, but is mirrored most effectively in the rhythm of the verbal surface:

> No more wine? then we'll push back chairs and
> talk.
> A final glass for me, though: Cool i' faith!
> We ought to have our Abbey back, you see
> It's different, preaching in basilicas
> And doing duty in some masterpiece
> Like this brother Pugin's, bless his heart!
> I doubt if they're half baked, those chalk rosettes,
> Ciphers and stucco-twiddlings everywhere;
> It's just like breathing in a lime-kiln: eh?
> These hot long ceremonies of our church
> Cost us a little -- oh, they pay the price,
> You take me -- amply pay it! Now, we'll talk.[16]

In addition, Browning's interest in the dynamic in nature and man, and his conception of poetry as process made the choice of the dramatic monologue, with its metamorphic donning of masks in a constantly changing framework, particularly apt. Browning, fascinated by the idea of process in nature, regarded the dynamic as the symptom of the divine spark dwelling in all living creatures. The experimental approach being essential to Browning, he deplored any attempt to organize the variety of nature into categories. In the dramatic monologue he found a way of escaping the artificial linear flow of an autobiography. Although Browning was to experiment with the form, moving away from it altogether towards drama, dialogue or pure discourse, the main body of his work follows a consistent pattern -- a single speaker is presented dramatically and concisely in a particularized setting, at a moment of heightened perception which crystallizes the past and present. In the best of Browning's monologues, such as Andrea del Sarto, the narrative, image and rhythmic background

coalesce to form a single total impression, in spite of the range in time of the subject matter over the whole of the persona's lifetime. The dynamic flow is not forced into the abstract mould of the linear plot, but is arrested for the single moment of total awareness which is both movement and stillness.

Browning's skill in exploiting the mimetic aspects of the dramatic monologue by means of idiomatic language and precise visual settings has often been remarked. In spite of this skill in evoking a realistic background of image and fact, his use of the monologue for self analysis led to certain peculiarities in the subject matter and its handling. Browning's own imperious personality comes through in the tone and manner of his character's speech, in the violent transitions of thought, compression of diction, nervous rhythmic energy, and even in the patterns of thinking of the supposedly diverse characters he presents. The extent to which Browning's primary interest is self analysis is revealed in his selection of characters. Browning's donning of the mask is part of a process of self exploration, the persona projected as a representative of an opposing point of view or of a view partially Browning's own, but always selected with reference to problems of concern to the poet himself. His choice of characters that are slightly off-centre -- his preoccupation with failures and imposters -- would seem to arise from his interest in his own mental processes -- a journey into the "heart of darkness" in search of self knowledge:

> Our interest's on the dangerous edge of things,
> The honest thief, the tender murderer.[17]

Viewing Browning's dramatic monologues in the context of the work of later poets, we are conscious of certain limitations in the scope of Browning's psyhological analysis. The world of the unconscious and semi-conscious, the portrayal of states of mind rather than ideas, the tracing of the complex movements of the mind rather than rational thinking have tended to become the subject matter of the poetry of Browning's successors. C. M. Bowra in The Creative Experiment views modern poetry as marked by

> an ideal of truth to emotion, to all that the poet feels, to those darker states of mind bordering on the unconscious which he does not fully understand, but knows to be important in his whole condition . . . They must do more than convey ideas: they must re-create certain states for their readers as they had themselves known them . . . It also means that the poets try to express experience not as the mind orders and arranges it in retrospect but as it really felt with all its contradictions and ambiguities.[18]

Certainly Browning does move confidently through this same interior world with its mingling of appearance and reality, good and evil, irrelevance and rationality, but his main emphasis seems to be placed on the movement of ideas within the complex psychological framework. He analyzes through his personae divergent points of view concerning intellectual areas in which he is interested, examines the depths at which these ideas are held and the meaning they have with reference to the persona's total experience. This leads him in some of his later poetry to the projection of personae who have no dramatic existence apart from the poet, who are shadows projected merely to discuss certain intellectual attitudes.

This main interest in ideas leads to a simplification in Browning's psychological analysis. In his introduction to Browning's essay on Chatterton, D. Smalley points out how Browning 'explains the

whole of his hero's later, superficially complex and ambiguous conduct in terms of a single tendency of his nature that is with him at the beginning of his career'[19] Many of Browning's monologues use this same method, a simple psychological statement concerning the persona becoming a point of departure, the whole framework of the argument arising from this one psychological propensity. In Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau, a whole political philosophy based on what is represented as an insidious maintenance of the status quo, is portrayed as arising from a single facet of the Prince's character:

> T'is my nature, when I am at ease,
> Rather than idle out my life too long,
> To want to do a thing -- to put a thought,
> Whether a great thought or a little one,
> Into an act, as nearly as may be.
> Make what is absolutely new -- I can't,
> Mar what is made already well enough --
> I won't: but turn to best account the thing
> That's half-made -- that I can.[20]

Browning's monologues never express simply moods or states of mind. Mood and idea frequently cohere in his poetry, but the result is an examination of mood and idea rather than an expression. We are always conscious of an analytic manipulation of the individual's stream of consciousness, an element of controlled organization in the exposure which reveals personality in terms of motives, ideas and actions perceived within the rational system of Browning's intellectual view of the human environment.

The best of Browning's monologues are similar to the novels of Henry James in the minute analysis of ideas and ways of thinking, in the presentation of a complex character in a fluid system, in the use of a shifting point of view and of precise detail of setting to intensify or reflect emotional conflict.

Even though all of these personae point obsessively back to the poet himself, there is a quality of vitality that is missing from the literary monologues of Pound and Eliot and from James's novels -- a central paradox in Browning's poetry that interested Henry James:

> What remains with us all this time, none the less, is the effect of magnification, the exposure of each of these figures, in its degree, to that iridescent wash of personality, of temper and faculty, that our author ladles out to them, as the copious share of each, from his own great reservoir of spiritual health, and which makes us, as I have noted, seek the reason of a perpetual anomaly. Why, bristling so with references to <u>him</u> rather than with references to each other or to any accompanying set of circumstances, do they still establish more truth and beauty than they sacrifice, do they still, according to their chance, help to make "The Ring and the Book" a great living thing, a great objective mass? . . . To express his inner self -- his outward was a different affair! -- and to express it utterly, even if no matter how, was clearly, for his own measure and consciousness of that inner self, to <u>be</u> poetic; and the solution of all the deviations and disparities or, speaking critically, monstrosities, in the mingled tissue of his work, is the fact that whether or no by such convulsions of soul and sense life got delivered for him, the garment of life (which for him was poetry and poetry alone) got disposed in its due and adequate multitudinous folds.[21]

3. <u>The Mask as Metamorphosis</u>

> O strange face there in the glass!
> O ribald company, O saintly host,
> O sorrow-swept my fool,
> What answer? O ye myriad
> That strive and play and pass,
> Jest, challenge, counterlie
> I? I? I?
> And ye?[22]--Ezra Pound, <u>On His Own Face in a Glass</u>

The mark of Browning is unmistakable on many of Pound's early monologues, such as Faman Librosque Cano, Piere Vidal Old, and Cino:

> Bah! I have sung women in three cities,
> But it is all the same;
> And I will sing of the sun.
>
> . . .
>
> Once, twice, a year --
> Vaguely, thus word they:
>
> 'Cino?' Oh, eh Cino Polnesi,
> The singer is't you mean?'
> 'Oh yes, passed once our way,
> A saucy fellow, but . . .
> (Oh, they are all one these vagabonds),
> Peste! 'tis his own songs?
> Or some other's that he sings?[23]

Pound adopts many of Browning's characteristic techniques. An unspeaking auditor is drawn within the framework of the poem:

> But you, My Lord, how with your city?
> But you 'My Lord', God's pity!
> And all I knew were out, My Lord, you
> Were Lack-land Cino, e'en as I am,
> O Sinistro.[24]

The peculiar mannerisms of Browning's poetry -- the nervous rhythms of his staccato conversational style and the heaping of thoughts and images -- make their appearance in Pound's early poetry with only slight transformation:

> Behold mine audience,
> As we had seen him yesterday.
>
> Scrawny, be-spectacled, out at heels,
> Such an one as the world feels
> A sort of curse against its guzzling
> And its age-lasting wallow for red greed
> And yet; full speed
> Though it should run for its own getting,
> Will turn aside to sneer at
> 'Cause he hath
> No coin, no will to snatch the aftermath
> Of Mammon.

Such an one as women draw away from
For the tobacco ashes scattered on his coat
And sith his throat
Shows razor's unfamiliarity
And three days' beard;

Such an one picking a ragged
Backless copy from the stall,
Too cheap for cataloguing,
Loquitur,

'Ah-eh! the strange rare name. . .
Ah-eh! He must be rare if even I have not. . .'[25]

The influence of Browning on the subject matter of Pound's early poetry is also clearly evident. These poems frequently embody a discussion of art, usually projected through a persona slightly off-centre -- a remote troubadour or outcast eccentric. Pound like Browning explores the past through his created persona, focussing his attention on periods of dynamic social and artistic changes such as the early Italian Renaissance, and on periods of particular interest to him technically. As in Browning's poetry, this projection of a created persona, amplified with the total weight of the culture he personifies, is part of a process of examination of Pound's own environment, the resultant personality being both an authentic historical projection and the poet's contemporary; As G.S. Fraser points out in an essay on Pound,

> This is perhaps Pound's great gift as poet of roles -- his power or forcefully combining partial inadequacies into a not at all inadequate whole. Propertius, for instance, needs re-interpretation, even distortion, to bring him within our own framework; but we must also re-interpret and distort that framework (we must correlate two variables, in fact) to come to terms with him.[26]

In Near Perigord Pound attempts an examination of the nature of truth, using a framework and method similar to Browning's The Ring and the Book. The factual evidence Pound starts with is a love

poem written by the twelfth century troubadour Bertrans de Born. He attempts from this poem to deduce the real motivation behind the poem, whether it was simply a love poem addressed to Bertrans's Lady Maent, or part of his many intrigues in war, this total analytic examination revealing the psychological depths of the persona Bertrans. The question is examined from all angles. Evidence is presented in support of the claim that the poem is simply a love poem. Countering this, internal clues within the poem indicate that it could also be a plan for a campaign. In an attempt to resolve the question, Pound recreates the conception of the poem itself, following de Borns through its actual composition. External characters, Richard Coeur de Lion and Arnaut Daniel are projected to give their opinion. The question is resolved in an ending in which all of the points of view are seen to be partially true.

In spite of the pronounced influence of Browning on these monologues, a voice is clearly evident that is not Browning:

> By the still pool of Mar-nan-otha
> Have I found me a bride
> That was dog-wood tree some syne,
> She hath called me from mine own ways,
> She hath hushed by rancour of council,
> Bidding me praise
>
> Naught but the wind that flutters in the leaves.[27]
>
> There shut up in his castle, Tairiran's.
> She who had nor ears nor tongue save in her hands,
> Gone -- ah, gone -- untouched, unreachable!
> She who could never live save through one person,
> She who could never speak save to one person,
> And all the rest of her a shifting change,
> A broken bundle of mirrors.[28]

The staccato straining revelation of motives has been transformed into a lyrical revelation of mood. Browning's projection of a persona into a precisely conceived setting for the purpose of an analysis based

on a kind of sympathetic identification has given way in Pound's poetry to the projection of a mood rather than a clearly conceived character. An element of romantic nostalgia and regret pervades many of the poems in Personae, such as Piere Vidal Old and La Fraisne. Even the lusty Bertrans in Sestina: Altaforte who has 'no life save when the swords clash' has a kind of stilted vitality when compared with the irrepressible Fra Lippo Lippi. Although there is apparent in Pound's early monologues a greater variety in style than in Browning's, each persona speaking his own language in a more clearly differentiated manner, there is an element of what Wyndham Lewis calls the 'spirited salon picture'[29] in Pound's early handling of the Provençal themes that makes them seem lifeless when juxtaposed with some of Browning's monologues, as F.R. Leavis has pointed out in New Bearings in English Poetry:

> Browning has much to do with the way in which the Provençal themes of Personae are handled: the poetic world is to be a 'real world'. But Mr. Pound's Provence is none the less a form of romantic evasion: his Browning consorts quite happily with Mr. Yeats.[30]

After Personae and Lustra, Pound begins to move away from his imitations of Browning's representation of the mask in the dramatic monologue. During this time, Pound comes in contact with the Japanese Noh drama -- which provides a formative influence on his conception of the mask at least equal to that of Browning. It is at this point that Pound parts company with Browning, as Pound finds in the Noh drama potential solutions to many of the problems raised by Browning's poetry. The Noh is a ritualistic drama of masks, which speak in accompaniment to movement, colour

and song. The drama is enacted with no external setting or properties, one scene, the pine tree, symbol of the unchanging, being painted on the background. The Noh drama does not fractionate and order its subject matter, but reflects the total cycle of nature:

> The Noh holds up a mirror to nature in a manner very different from the Western convention of plot. I mean the Noh performance of the five or six plays in order presents a complete service of life. We do not find, as we find in Hamlet, a certain situation or problem set out and analyzed. The Noh service presents, or symbolizes, a complete diagram of life and recurrence.[31]

Ideally, the actor and the mask are one. The mask superimposes an emotion or state of mind on the actor, but the actor himself is revealed through the mask:

> Each pupil has his own voice; it cannot be made to imitate the voice of an old woman or a spirit (oni). It must remain always the same, his own; yet with that one individual voice of his he must so express himself as to make it clear that it is the mentality of an old woman, or whatever it happens to be, who is speaking.[32]

The Noh presents a vivid hour or crisis in which no one feature of the performance predominates:

> The beauty and power of Noh lie in the concentration. All elements -- costume, motion, verse and music -- unite to produce a single clarified impression. Each drama embodies some primary human relation or emotion; and the poetic sweetness or poignancy of this is carried to its highest degree by carefully excluding all such obstrusive elements as a mimetic realism or vulgar sensation might demand. The emotion is always fixed upon idea, not upon personality. The solo parts express great types of human character, derived from Japanese history. . . Some one of these intense emotions is chosen for a piece, and in it, elevated to the plane of universality by the intensity and purity of treatment.[33]

This uniting of all artistic modes in the Noh drama attracted Pound and Yeats. Continuing the cross fertilization of the arts that had begun again with the pre-Raphaelites in England, and was evident in France in Baudelaire's and Mallarmé's interest in Wagner's experiments, they were both interested in the assimilation into poetic forms of the techniques of music and of the plastic and visual arts. As an antidote to the blurring of poetry in the 90's, the techniques of the latest experimental art forms in sculpture, painting and music were studied. Pound followed the Pre-Raphaelites in emphasizing the proximity of poetry to both painting and music. In his essay on Vorticism, Pound describes two kinds of poetry -- the one as 'poetry where music, sheer melody, seems as if it were bursting into speech' and the other as 'poetry where painting and sculpture seems as if it were just coming over into speech'.[34]

Pound's conception of the mask is closely related to that embodied in the Noh drama. The mask imposes the single emotion or mood, and the voice of the poet comes through not as the speaker but in the rhythm of the verbal surface. Through identification with another personality, a state of objectification is achieved, all personal ideas and emotions are removed, the poet remaining only in his function as creator. Yeats formulates the process in Hegelian terms as the uniting of a personality with its opposite to form a new personality, which is synthetic, but in reality a more exact realization of the potentialities present in the original. The personae are not forms artificially projected, but forms existing in the human consciousness -- forms which are projected by the speaking voice.

As a result, Pound, like Browning, conceives of the use of personae as a means of achieving self realization, but, unlike Browning, a self realization in terms of self effacement rather than affirmation. In his essay on Vorticism, Pound outlines what he has attempted to achieve through his use of the mask:

> In the "search for oneself", in the search for"sincere self-expression", one gropes, one finds some seeming verity. One says "I am" this, that, or the other, and with the words scarcely uttered one ceases to be that thing.
>
> I began this search for the real in a book called Personae casting off, as it were, complete masks of the self in each poem. I continued in a long series of translations, which were but more elaborate masks.
>
> Secondly, I made poems like "The Return", which is an objective reality, and has a complicated sort of significance, like Mr. Epstein's "Sun God" or Mr. Brzeska's "Boy with a Coney". Thirdly I have written "Heather" which represents a state of consciousness or "implies", or "implicates" it.
>
> A Russian correspondent, after having called it a symbolist poem and having been convinced that it was not symbolism, said slowly: "I see, you wish to give people new eyes, not to make them see some particular new thing.[35]

In a poem such as The Return, a mask rather than a persona, a total impression is created through the fusion of an emotional area and the visual and acoustic background, producing an effect of many dimensions, but an effect obtainable by language alone:

> See, they return; ah, see the tentative
> Movements, and the slow feet,
> The trouble in the pace and the uncertain
> Wavering!
> See they return, one, and by one,
> With fear, as half-awakened;
> As if the snow should hesitate
> And murmur in the wind,
> and half turn back;
> These were the 'Wing'd-with-Awe',
> Inviolable.

Gods of the winged shoe!
With them the silver hounds,
sniffing the trace of air!

Haie! Haie!
These were the swift to harry;
These the keen-scented;
These were the souls of blood.

Slow on the leash,
pallid the leash-man![36]

This 'objective reality' is the result in poetry of the same reduction to primary forms as was attempted in Vorticist painting and sculpture -- a type of immortalizing of the human not through a presentation in general abstract terms, but through the reduction of the human figures to a congeries of images. There is nothing left of the human personae here but the atmosphere of their passing. The poem communicates instead of one particular construct of reality, a type of emotional suspension, a vortex into which rushes a complex of particular visual experiences.

The poem Heather reveals further the extent to which Pound has gone beyond the limits of Browning's techniques of psychological analysis:

The black panther treads at my side,
And above my fingers
There float the petal-like flames.

The milk-white girls
Unbend from the holly-trees,
And their snow-white leopard
Watches to follow our trace.[37]

In this poem, the presentation of a distinct character, setting and idea has given way to the landscape of a complex mental state. The mask has become the vehicle for presenting the mind at the point of receiving and feeling, not in its later reasoning stage.

The development of the mask to project movements of the mind divorced from a clearly delineated persona, leads to the complex structuring of the Cantos. The Cantos are basically conversation, but there is no one speaker through whom this torrent of conversation is projected:

> The enormous tragedy of the dream in the peasant's
> bent shoulders
> Manes! Manes was tanned and stuffed,
> Thus Ben and La Clara a Milano
> by the heels at Milano
> The maggots shd/eat the dead bullock
> DIGENES, διγενές, but the twice crucified
> where in history will you find it?
> yet say this to the Possum: a bang, not a whimper,
> with a bang not with a whimper,
> To build the city of Dioce whose terraces are the
> colour of stars.
> The suave eyes, quiet, not scornful,
> rain also is of the process.
> What you depart from is not the way
> And olive tree blown white in the wind
> washed in the Kiang and Han
> what whiteness will you add to this whiteness,
> what candour?
> 'the great periplum brings in the stars to our shore'.
> You have passed the pillars and outward from Herakles
> When Lucifer fell in N. Carolina.
> if the sauve air give way to scirocco
> ΟΎΤΙΣ, ΟΎΤΙΣ? Odysseus
> the name of my family.[38]

Although each canto has the immediacy and broken flow of a monologue and tends to take its shape from a single climactic area of the subject matter, many landscapes, voices and persona surge through a single canto. The total poem is a mask through which Pound explores his cultural origins. The poem is arranged thematically and since there is no one protagonist, the poem takes shape from the juxtaposition and recurrence of the themes within the ordering consciousness of the poet.

Basic motifs of the thematic structure are the journeys of Odysseus and Dante, and the presence of a composite persona, Pound-Odysseus or Pound-Dante, is frequently perceived in the background of the poem. The poem presents a bewildering succession of landscapes, personae, documents, accounts of action, designed to embody the periods in our cultural history that interest Pound -- ancient Greece, China, Provence, Renaissance Italy, Jeffersonian America. These periods of history are presented as composite images in the form of scenes from the lives of crucial figures, a succession of personae, who are inflated with the total force of their milieu and become in effect the voice of history.

The relation between these various personae and the poet himself is a complex ambivalent one. The personae have an existence as distinct entities apart from the poet, while at the same time they exist as projections fused with the poet's own sensibility. This projection attained through a state of controlled detachments is described by Pound in the Preface to his Cavalcanti Poems (1910) as a

> state when the feeling by its intensity surpasses
> our powers of bearing and we seem to stand aside
> and watch it surging across some thing or being
> with whom we are no longer identified.[39]

The poet through a process of metamorphosis becomes all of the characters in the poem, who, perceived and presented within the ordering consciousness of the poet, are simultaneously personae of the poet himself. The total poem represents this process of fusion and separation suspended in this experiencing and ordering consciousness which journeys through the periplum of the Cantos.

III

THE POETIC IDIOM

1. Introduction

The frequent assertion by Pound and Eliot of their debt to nineteenth century French literature has tended to obscure the extent to which the modern poetic idiom is a logical technical development of tendencies present in English poetry in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Pound can find much to interest him in Browning's technical innovations, because those innovations are the result of attitudes and tendencies not dissimilar to those of the Symbolist poets. Pound and Eliot, concerned both with escaping the faults and influences of their immediate predecessors and with establishing a reading public for an international literature, have been at least partially responsible for the frequently held belief that the great tradition of English poetry ended somewhere around 1914. This lack of appreciation of a continuity in aim and technique has tended to lead to a neglect or incomplete treatment of the technical achievements of nineteenth century literature and has closed off the most fertile area in which to find information concerning the formative aspects of the changes in technique that have taken place since then.

One of the main reasons for the difficulty of placing poets such as Browning and Pound in the same context is due to the shift from

a poetry in which subject matter and technique tended to become separated in such a way that subject matter at times became of primary importance, to a poetry in which it is not possible to separate form and content, theme and technique. Pound says nothing that his technique does not reveal in action, whereas Browning's statement of "fact" tends to conceal the relationship between form and statement.

According to Pound, the technical aspects of a poet's performance are not just convenient methods of communicating subject matter:

> An artist's technique is a test of his personal validity... Honesty of the word is the writer's first aim, for without it he can communicate nothing efficiently.[1]

> Without a rigorous technique, NO renaissance. I don't say technique is enough, or that a Bartok's struggles to renew a technique are enough, but without rigorous overhauling of technique and rigorous demands laid on technique, no renaissance.[2]

The three propositions of the Imagist Manifesto were formulated in 1912 by Richard Aldington, H.D. and Pound in an effort to re-introduce into a debilitated poetry a technique as exacting and meticulous as that of the scientist. The Manifesto was itself an attempt to correct what Pound and his fellow imagists believed to be the greatest faults of their immediate predecessors. In Make It New Pound restates the three fundamental points:

1. Direct treatment of the "thing" whether subjective or objective.

2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.

3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in the sequence of a metronome.[3]

Pound himself considers the subject matter of poetry to be a constant, each age discovering for itself the technical means of releasing this subject matter:

> My pawing over the ancients and semi-ancients has been one struggle to find out what has been done, once for all, better than it can ever be done again, and to find out what remains for us to do, and plenty does remain, for if we still feel the same emotions as those which launched the thousand ships, it is quite certain that we come on these feelings differently, through different nuances, by different intellectual gradations. Each age has its own abounding gifts yet only some ages transmute them into matter of duration. No good poetry is ever written in a manner twenty years old, for to write in such a manner shows conclusively that the writer thinks from books, convention and cliché, and not from life, yet a man feeling the divorce of life and his art may naturally try to resurrect a forgotten mode if he finds in that mode some leaven, or if he thinks he sees in it some element lacking in contemporary art which might unite that art again to its sustenance, life.[4]

Pound's interest in the past is focussed on the innovators, particularly on those authors whose innovations could be adapted to the demands of modern poetry. Pound's main technical experimentation has been directed toward finding the new modes of expression for the contemporary age -- modes which would be more than vehicles but would themselves command an audience in a reluctant age.

Browning, on the other hand, is more concerned with the subject matter of his poetry than with the technique. A point of view which seems to be identical with Pound's belief in the universality of poetic subject matter and in the necessity for discovering techniques to release this subject matter can be found in the following statement of the persona in Fifine at the Fair:

> The forms, the themes -- no one without its counterpart
> Ages ago; no one but, mumbled the due time
> I' the mouth of the eater, needs be cooked again in rhyme,
> Dished up anew in paint, sauce-smothered fresh in sound,
> To suit the wisdom -tooth, just cut, of the age, that's found

With gums obtuse to gust and smack which relished so
The meat o'the meal folk made some fifty years ago.
But don't suppose the new was able to efface
The old without a struggle, a pang!
. . . . . .
And so on, till one day, another age, by due
Rotation, pries, sniffs, smacks, discovers old is new,
And sauce our sires pronounced insipid, proves again
Sole piquant, may resume its titillating reign.[5]

However, Browning appears to make a different application of this conception. Since for Browning the writing of poetry was largely a process of working out his own ideas, Browning was concerned more with the problem of giving new perspectives on ideas than with the verbal surface _per se_. His subject matter demanded new modes of expression. Browning developed these modes, but his technique suggests an explosive shifting of perspective rather than the strategy of the skilled craftsman creating new "nodes" of experience. Browning's conception of the artist as a seer, who in sudden flashes of illumination, perceives things that are closed to the ordinary rational consciousness, controls his technique. Each poem is a separate possibility, forcing its own way in the shape of a revelation. The use of a conventional form would be an artificial restraint imposed on the poem's organic growth. The ideal poem should be an extemporization of the emotion and intuitive perception of the moment, an expression like that of _Abt Vogler_:

All through my keys that gave their sounds to a wish of my soul,
All through my soul that praised as its wish flowed visibly forth,
All through music and me! For think, had I painted the whole,
Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the process so wonder-worth:
Had I written the same, made verse -- still, effect proceeds from cause,

Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear how the tale
is told;
It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to laws,
Painter and poet are proud in the artist-list enrolled:-
But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will
that can,
Existent behind all laws, that made them and, lo,
they are!
And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed
to man,
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth
sound, but a star.
Consider it well; each tone of our scale in itself is
nought;
It is everywhere in the world -- loud, soft, and
all is said;
Give it to me to use! I mixt it with two in my
thought.
And there! Ye have heard and seen: consider and
bow the head![6]

The controlled and ordered, Browning felt, cannot express these single moments. The imperfect and roughly hewn -- the poem in process -- reflects creativity in action, not fossilized creation in a conventional form. "Why rushed the discords in, but that harmony should be prized".[7]

It is important to recognize that the origin of Browning's apparent tendency to move toward a kind of free verse and organic form lies in his metaphysical ideas -- rather than in any aesthetic considerations such as governed the Symbolist poets. Browning's constant technical experimentation was the product of a need to communicate a complex subject matter and an individual point of view. The method of communication always tended to remain less important than the message.

2. The Representation of the Moment

> Piece after piece that armour broke away,
> Because perceptions whole, like that he sought
> To clothe, reject so pure a work of thought
> As language: thought may take perceptions' place
> But hardly co-exist in any case,
> Being its mere presentment -- of the whole
> By parts, the simultaneous and the sole
> By the successive and many.[8] -- Robert Browning, Sordello

a. The Alternation of Image and Thought

Browning's main poetic problem, as revealed in Sordello, was to present the unity of perception in terms of a language which he considered essentially linear. He was interested in registering the whole complex of thought within a character's mind at the moment of illumination when the meaning of all that has ever happened to the character suddenly becomes clear. His aim was to present thought and emotion fused in a single moment of time. He found that he could not use the method of linear narration to express this single state of mind.

In his monologues, Browning developed many techniques designed to create the effect of an instantaneous presentation. The narrative is filtered in, piece by piece, the total impression frequently being conveyed by a shock ironical ending. He attempting to twist language itself into a non-linear form in order to capture the movements of the mind. The disjointed language, constant breaking and movement of idea and mood, saturated with the emotion of a character at a point of crisis, combine to create a total mental impression, as in this passage from Andrea del Sarto:

> To Raphael's! -- And indeed the arm is wrong,
> I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see,
> Give the chalk here -- quick, thus the line should go!
> Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!
> Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,

> (What he? why, who but Michael Agnolo?
> Do you forget already words like those?)
> If really there was a chance, so lost,--
> Is, whether you're -- not grateful -- but more pleased.
> Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed![9]

As Browning's arguments become more abstract in his later monologues, the increasing distortion of syntax and language indicate the inadequacy of the method:

> Nay, Darwin tells of such as love the bower--
> His bower-birds opportunely yield us yet
> The lacking instance when at lost to get
> A feathered parallel to what we find
> The secret motor of some mighty mind
> That worked such wonders -- all for vanity!
> Worked them to haply figure in the eye
> Of intimates as first of doers' kind?[10]

In this passage, the meaning remains clear in spite of the syntactical complications, designed to break the forward movement of the syntax. As much meaning and information as possible is crammed into the sentence by the insertion of parenthetic material, by the use of the three relative clauses, and by the repetition of the verb 'worked'. By using such grammatical devices, Browning achieves a kind of musical structure in his sentences through a process of statement and counter or qualifying statement. In this way, he sets up an internal movement which continually disrupts the basic linear flow of the language. This method at best allows Browning's meaning to emerge slowly, but all too frequently, the constant breaking and at times omitting of parts of speech dislocates not only the grammatical structure of the sentence but the meaning as well.

Browning's approach to expressing the unity of perception through a distortion or compression of syntactical forms was bound to be unsatisfactory. His distrust of the language of sense experience and his interest in moving beyond the area of immediate reality to

the expression of abstract truths diverted him from a recognition of the potential use of the image as a means of abbreviating the matrix of ideas, emotions and sensual experience that comprise the total act of perception. As a result, Browning tends to use the image as illustration or ornament, a practice which accentuates the very discontinuous aspects of his poetry that he is trying to fuse into the expression of a unified experience and sensibility.

It has been claimed that 'Browning has a distinct image of the person or action that he intends to describe, but the image is so to speak always saturated with thought'.[11] However, to a great extent, the intellectual factor in his image making tends to dominate. Image and thought succeed one another rather than merge, producing patterns of emblematic images and similes:

> On the rock, they scorch
> Like a drop of fire
> From a brandished torch,
> Fell two red fans of a butterfly:
> No turf, no rock, in their ugly stead,
> See, wonderful blue and red!
>
> Is it not so
> With the minds of men?
> The level and the low,
> The burnt and bare, in themselves; but then
> With such a blue and red grace, not theirs,
> Love settling unawares![12]

This syncopation of thought and image can be seen recurring in the larger framework of a poem in Fifine at the Fair. This poem is pervaded with imagery of the sea, this imagery being explicitly related to the theme in the introduction with the image of the swimmer arising out of the flux, but this framework of imagery remains a network of artificially prepared relations, the abstract statement explained by the complicated detailed similes:

I wish
Some wind would waft this way a glassy bubble-fish
O' the kind the sea inflates, and show you, once detached
From wave . . . or no, the event is better told than
watched:
Still may the thing float free, globose and opaline
All over, save where just the amethysts combine
To blue their best, rim-round the sea-flower with a tinge
Earth's violet never knew! Well, 'neath that gem-
tipped fringe,
A head lurks -- of a kind that acts as stomach too;
Then comes the emptiness which out the water blew
So big and burly-like, but, dry of water drained,
Withers away nine-tenths.
. . . . . .
But take the rill which ends a race o'er yonder ledge
O'the fissured cliff, to find its fate in smoke below!
Disengage that, and ask -- what news of life, you know
It led, that long lone way, through pasture, plain
and waste?
All's gone to give the sea!
. . . . . .
The full-blown ingrate, mere recipient of the brine,
That takes all and gives naught, is Man; the feminine
Rillet that, taking all and giving nought in turn,
Goes headlong to her death i'the sea, without concern
For the old inland life, snow-soft and silver clear
That's woman -- typified from Fifine to Elvire.[13]

The image in Browning seems to arise from a conscious search for analogies and the consequent perception of an unexpected relation between objects and emotions or ideas. The result is a type of imagery that appears to be very similar in content to that which has dominated modern poetry. As G. K. Chesterton has pointed out, the imagery in Browning's predominantly lyric poems draws upon areas of imagery previously regarded as unsuitable for lyric poetry -- 'suburban streets, straws, garden-rakes, medicine bottles, pianos, window-blinds, burnt cork, fashionable fur-coats'[14] -- the whole flotsam of the modern city that later readers have come to expect in the context of poetic representations of delicate emotions. Bagehot's contemporary analysis of Browning's 'grotesque art' could very well apply to much of the poetry succeeding Browning insofar as the analysis is confined to a discussion

of the methods rather than the aims of this type of art. Grotesque art, Bagehot states,

> takes the type, so to say, in difficulties. It gives a representation of it in its minimum development, amid the circumstances least favourable to it, just while it is struggling with obstacles, just where it is encumbered with incongruities.
>
> This art works by contrast. It enables you to see, it makes you see, the perfect type by painting the opposite deviation. It shows you what ought to be by what ought not to be. When complete, it reminds you of the perfect image, by showing you the distorted or imperfect image.[15]

However, the distorting mirror of Browning's imagination proclaims not only the discrepancy between the perfect and imperfect, but tends to underline the very gap between the representation and the moment of perception which he is trying to eliminate.

Browning's desire to present the unity of perception liberated from the linear narrative and syntactical forms apparently inherent in the language led also to Browning's rejection of conventional poetic forms. The dramatic monologue form, as has been discussed earlier, is particularly suited to a poet desiring to express a single moment of illumination, and the form in most of Browning's monologues takes its shape from the subject matter. In Pippa Passes and The Ring and the Book Browning moves beyond this form in experimental work which anticipates modern developments. In Pippa Passes Browning uses a technique of juxtaposition to present five separate narratives within a single framework. The poem is organized by its theme -- which is one of betrayal--not by a linear plot and series of sub plots. The theme is represented in the four main episodes which appear in the poem as single scenes embodying the total action along with its cause and effects.

These scenes are juxtaposed, the only connection between them being the slender thread of Pippa's song as she passes through the village on her holiday -- her own story representing the fifth betrayal. In The Ring and the Book Browning adapts the monologue form itself for use in a long poem. Browning examines, in this poem, a given situation from all possible angles, building up a complicated structure in which the varying number of points of view are kept in mind at any one point in the poem. Browning presents the details of these crimes and all the possible reactions to them, and every detail is related and relative. The true interpretation of the facts is to emerge from the facts themselves, not to be imposed by the author on his material. There is not perceptible in this poem, in so far as the poem is successful in realizing its aims, any gradations in presentation, nor the pyramidal structure to be found when a poem is written with a static framework. This rejection of a fixed point of view from which characters and their environment are examined in set relations leads to a curious flattening of perspective apparent in most of Browning's work, but most clearly seen in The Ring and the Book. The personae and their settings, their actions and motives merge together in some middle territory which is neither foreground nor background, the total meaning of the poem being conveyed not by any logical ordering of the material but by the manipulation of light and shade, in the emergence of Pompilia from the shadows surrounding Guido in the Pope's single moment of intuitive understanding.

b. The Fusion of Image and Thought

Just as Browning was attempting to present emotion and thought fused in a single act of perception, the imagist attempts to fuse image, emotion and thought. Pound, in defining the image as 'that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time'[16] emphasizes the need for simultaneity if the adequate aesthetic effect is to be achieved:

> It is the presentation of such a "complex" simultaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation: that sense of freedom from time and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art.[17]

There should be, according to Pound, no separation of image and thought, no sense of the distancing between the idea and the object which produces pure description or ornamental art:

> All poetic language is the language of exploration. Since the beginning of bad writing, writers have used the images as ornaments. The point of imagism is that it does not use images as ornaments. The image is itself the speech. The image is the word beyond formulated language.[18]
>
> Don't be'viewy'-- Leave that to the writers of pretty little philogophic essays. Don't be descriptive; remember that the painter can describe a landscape much better than you can, and that he has to know a great deal more about it.
>
> When Shakespeare talks of the 'Dawn in russet mantle clad' he presents something which the painter does not present. There is in this line of his nothing that one can call description; he presents.[19]

The poem can achieve an immediate impact through an intense focussing on a single image, as in Pound's In a Station of the Metro:

> The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
> Petals on a wet, black bough.[20]

Here a single correspondence between two apparently unrelated things forced together in an image is designed to gather in a complexity of

meanings. It is a poetic equivalent to the collage technique of surrealist painting, described in Max Ernst's essay Inspiration to Order as 'the exploitation of the chance meeting on a non-suitable plane of two mutually distinct realities'.[21] An object or idea, dislocated from its conventional setting, gains more force as a thing in itself -- and this greater force is released simultaneously by the clash of two or more such objects. The imagists, interested in this simultaneous presentation of an emotional and intellectual complex through intense focusing on an object, studied the classical Japanese hokku:

> O fan of white silk,
> clear as frost on the glass-blade,
> You also are laid aside.[22]

Here the three part statement has moved beyond the surface grammatical interplay in the syllogism to the ordering of a more complex area of reality.

To effect this juxtaposition so that a simultaneous impression is conveyed, a distortion of the syntax of prose is necessary. T.E. Hulme sees as essential to poetry the arresting of time in the attempt to escape the linear and abstract qualities of prose:

> In prose as in algebra concrete things are embodied in signs or counters which are moved about according to rules, without being visualized at all in the process. There are in prose certain type situations and arrangements of words, which move as automatically into certain other arrangements as do functions in algebra. One only changes the X's and Y's back into physical things at the end of the process. Poetry, in one aspect at any rate, may be considered as an effort to avoid this characteristic of prose. It is not a counter language, but a visual concrete one. It is a compromise for a language of intuition which would hand over sensations bodily. It always endeavours to arrest you, and to make you continually see a physical thing, to prevent you gliding through an abstract process.[23]

Pound rejects conventional syntax, attempting to reproduce in his poetry the nouns in action of the Chinese ideogram, as represented in Fenollosa's Essay on the Chinese Written Character:

> A true noun, an isolated thing, does not exist in nature. Things are only the terminal points, or rather the melting points, of actions, cross-sections through actions, snap-shots. Neither can a pure verb, an abstract motion be possible in nature. The eye sees noun and verb as one thing: things in motion, motion in things, and so the Chinese conception tends to represent them... The sun-sign tangled in the branches of the tree sign=east "Rice-field" plus "struggle"=male.[24]

Pound rejects the subject-verb-object movement of the language. By analogy with the Chinese ideogram, he incorporates the action into the noun. The verbs in his sentences become adjectives, an arrested visual pattern being formed. The movement formerly obtained by the syntactical progression becomes in Pound's poetry a contrapuntal movement within a musical pattern of repetition and variation of theme, word and sound:

> Eyes brown topaz,
> Brookwater over brown sand,
> The white hounds on the slope,
> Glide of water, lights and the prore,
> Silver beaks out of night,
> Stone, bough over bough,
> lamps fluid in water,
> Pine by the black trunk of its shadow
> And on the hill black trunks of the shadow
> The trees melted in air.[25]

This type of relation between objects within a sentence is repeated in the larger unit of the canto. Sentences are left incomplete and juxtaposed without any apparent connection:

> Eleanor (she spoiled in a British climate)
> Ἐλανόρος and Ἐλέπτολις and
> poor old Homer blind,
> blind as a bat,
> Ear, ear for the sea-surge;
> rattle of old men's voices.

And then the phantom of Rome,
marble narrow for seats
'Si pulvis nullus' said Ovid,
'Erit, nullum tamen excute'.[26]

Almost the only syntactical connecting link used in this pattern of juxtaposed sentences is the paratactic 'and', a stylistic device which leaves the individual statements and images in their separate equal frames and yet gives a type of movement to the writing, suited to an epic that is conceived as "speech":

And Poictiers, you know, Guillaume Poictiers
had brought the song up out of Spain
With the singer and viels. But here they wanted a setting,
By Marecchia, where the water comes down over the cobbles
And Mastin had come to Verucchio,
and the sword, Paolo il Bello's
caught in the arras
And, in Este's house, Parasina
Paid
For this tribe paid always, and the house
Called also Atreides',
And the wind is still for a little
And the dust rolled
to one side a little
And he was twelve at the time, Sigismundo,
And no dues had been paid for three years,
And his elder brother gone pious;
And that year they fought in the streets,
And that year he got out to Cesena
and brought back the levies,
And that year he crossed by night over Foglia, and....[27]

The logical narrative structure and a fixed point of view give way in the Cantos to a thematic complex structure which forms s shape as inevitable as a Bach fugue. Yeats undertook to explain the method of the Cantos in "A Packet for Ezra Pound", a section which he introduced into the second edition of A Vision:

> For the last hour we have sat upon the roof which is also a garden discussing that immense poem of which but seven and twenty cantos are already published. I have often found there brightly printed kings, queens, knaves, but have never discovered why all the suits could not be dealt out in some quite different order. Now at last he

> explains that it will, when the hundredth canto is finished, display a structure like that of a Bach Fugue. There will be no plot, no chronicle of events, no logic of discourse, but two themes, the Descent into Hades from Homer, a Metamorphosis from Ovid, and mixed with these mediaeval or modern historical characters. He has tried to produce that picture Porteous commanded to Nicholas Poussin in Le chef d'oeuvre inconnu where everything rounds or thrusts itself without edges, without contours -- conventions of the intellect -- from a splash of tints and shades: to achieve a work as characteristic of the art of our time as the paintings of Cézanne, avowedly suggested by Porteous, as Ulysses and its dream association of words and images, a poem in which nothing can be taken out and reasoned over, nothing that is not a part of the poem itself. He has scribbled on the back of an envelope certain sets of letters that represent emotions or archetypal events -- I cannot find any adequate definition -- A B C D and then J K L M, and then each set of letters repeated, and then A B C D inverted and this repeated, and then a new element X Y Z, then certain letters that never recur, and then all sorts of combinations of X Y Z and J K L M and A B C D and D C B A, and all set whirling together. He had shown me up on wall a photograph of a cosimo Tura decoration in three compartments, in the upper the Triumph of Love and the Triumph of Chastity, in the middle Zodiacal signs, and in the lower certain events in Cosimo Tura's day. The Descent and the Metamorphosis -- A B C D and J K L M-- his fixed elements, took the place of the Zodiac, the archetypal persons -- X Y Z -- that of the Triumphs, and certain modern events -- his letters that do not recur -- that of those events in Cosimo Tura's day.[28]

Pound was later to state that this paragraph of Yeats has 'done more to prevent people reading Cantos for what is on the page than any other one smoke screen'[29]. Yet it would appear that any evaluation of the structure of the Cantos must still begin with this account by the author which Yeats has interpreted.

3. The Poetic Voice

> I believe in an 'absolute rhythm', a rhythm, that is, in poetry which corresponds exactly to the emotion or shade of emotion to be expressed. A man's rhythm must be interpretative, it will be, therefore, in the end, his own, uncounterfeiting, uncounterfeitable.[30] -- Ezra Pound, "A Retrospect"

a. Verse as Speech

A recurring motif in Pound's scattered comments on Browning is his praise of Browning's use of natural speech rhythms and precision in vocabulary, and his skill in handling larger units, in adapting verse pattern to narrative. In the ABC of Reading, Pound quotes, as an example of these particular qualities, a long passage from Sordello a portion of which follows:

> In Mantua territory half is slough,
> Half pine-tree forest, maples, scarlet oaks
> Breed o'er the river-beds, even Mincio chokes
> With sand the summer through, but 'tis morass
> In winter up to Mantua walls. There was,
> Some thirty years before this evening's coil,
> One spot reclaimed from the surrounding spoil;
> Goito, just a castle built amid
> A few mountains; firs and larches hid
> Their main defiles and rings of vineyard bound
> The rest.[31]

Pound suggests that one might perhaps 'have to retire as far as the Divine Commedia for continued narrative having such clarity of outline without clog and verbal impediment'. 'The "beauty"! he says, 'is not applied ornament, but makes the mental image more definite'.[32]

As recent critical examination of Browning's poetry has shown[33], the carelessness in handling verse patterns conventionally attributed to Browning is not based on a careful examination of the text.

Browning's contemporary critics, faced with his rejection of the heroic mode, were inclined to dismiss his conversational verse as careless verse. The heightened speech of the ordinary man, which Wordsworth thought should be the language of poetry, has acquired in Browning the whole weight of the human voice. It is this sense of the presence of an actual and particular speaker which underlies the effectiveness and vitality of the dramatic monologues. Roma Butler in The Bow and the Lyre has demonstrated by a detailed examination of a group of dramatic monologues how Browning uses rhythm as a reinforcement of meaning and even as statement itself:

> Stressing lightly conceptually unimportant syllables, and calling attention to others by heavy stress and alliteration, Browning achieves simultaneously in some lines both the artistic effect of alliterative verse and emphasis on idea. Thus, the rhythmic pattern of the poem becomes a part of the meaning much more profoundly than by merely echoing the sense . . . Closer to the Wyatt-Donne tradition, Browning uses a line basically conventional in that it has a predetermined number of syllables and stresses, but breaks with the musical tradition in the placement of syllables within the line, proposing to relate closely what is felt and said with the manner of saying it, to use rhythm both to create and support meaning.[34]

This source of Browning's strength, his reproduction of the tones of the speaking voice, becomes his weakness in some poems, where the mechanical clatter of the speaking voice leads to a lack of variety, and the repetition of the ejaculations and half finished sentences of conversation become mere devices rather than organic parts of a whole conception. The extent of Browning's disregard for the musical element in verse shows most clearly in a poem such as Rabbi Ben Ezra, where Browning's conversational style proves unequal to the task of varying tension in a purely discursive presentation:

For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off,calls the glory from the grey:
A whisper from the west
Shouts -- 'Add this to the rest,
Take it and try its worth: here dies another day.[35]

b. Verse as Speech and Music

Pound's metrical experiments have been directed toward the effecting of a fusion of poetry as speech and poetry as music, for which purpose he has studied the previous metrical innovations in certain crucial periods:

> I think the artist should master all known forms and system of metric, and I have with some persistence set about doing this, searching particularly in those periods wherein the systems came to birth or attained their maturity . . . I am constantly contending that it took two centuries of Provence and one of Tuscany to develop the media of Dante's masterwork, that it took the latinists of the Renaissance, and the Pleiade, and his own age of painted speech to prepare Shakespeare his tools.[36]

Pound's early poetry indicates the range of his eclectic metrical experiments. One of these experiments was his adaptation of Browning's conversational style:

Such an one picking a ragged
Backless copy from the stall,
Too cheap for cataloguing,
Loquitur,

'Ah-eh! the strange rare name . . .
Ah-eh! He must be rare if even I have not ...'[37]

An equally formative influence on Pound was his study of the Provençal troubadour poetry with its elaborate verse forms and rhyming patterns and its close adherence to musical motifs and structure:

> It is not intelligent to ignore the fact that both in Greece and in Provence the poetry attained its highest rhythmic and metrical brilliance at times when the arts of verse and nusic were most closely knit together, when each thing done by the poet had some definite musical urge or necessity bound up within it.[38]

In poems such as Altaforte, Pound, displaying his mastery of the elaborate patterning of the sestina, attains a fluid freedom of movement within the limits of a tightly controlled structure:

> In hot summer have I great rejoicing
> When the tempests kill the earth's foul peace,
> And the lightnings from black heav'n flash crimson
> And the fierce thunders roar me their music
> And the winds shriek through the clouds mad, opposing,
> And through all the riven skies God's swords clash.
>
> Hell grant soon we hear again the swords clash!
> And the shrill neighs of destriers in battle rejoicing,
> Spiked breast to spiked breast opposing!
> Better one hour's stour than a year's peace
> With fat boards, bawds, wine and frail music!
> Bah! there's no wine like the blood's crimson![39]

These two basic impulses -- poetry as a conversational mode in which false rhetorical elements have been eliminated and the cadences of the speaking voice are present, together with a poetry in which the 'absolute rhythm', the 'toneless phrase' expresses the exact emotional state -- are fused in certain sections of the Cantos, particularly in the opening sections of the poem:

> And then went down to the ship,
> Set keel to breakers, forth on the godly sea, and
> We set up mast and sail on that swart ship,
> Bore sheep aboard her, and our bodies also
> Heavy with weeping, so winds from sternward
> Bore us out onward with bellying canvas,
> Circe's this craft, the trim-coifed goddess.
> Then sat we amidships, wind jamming the tiller,
> Thus with stretched sail, we went oversea till day's
> end.

> Sun to his slumber, shadows o'er all the ocean,
> Came we then to the bounds of deepest water,
> To the Kimmerian lands, and peopled cities
> Covered with close-webbed mist, unpierced ever
> With glitter of sun-rays
> Nor with stars stretched, nor looking back from heaven
> Swartest night stretched over wretched men there.
> The ocean flowing backward, came we then to the place
> Aforesaid by Circe.[40]

This passage combines the limpidity of narrative presentation of the passage from Sordello previously quoted, along with a density of texture, an alliterative internal manipulation of the line which cuts across the narrative pattern and disrupts the linear flow. Pound achieves here the density of contrapuntal music by the use of alliteration, repetition of cadences, variations of pitch and tone, and the skilful use of the pause in which the rhythm is broken and re-formed. The result is a poetry which is weightless,

> But moving,
> so that sound runs upon sound.[41]

The poetic voices of Pound and Browning differ in many respects but they are similar in being dramatic voices which have become dislodged from their dramatic context. Any attempt to consider the nature of this dramatic quality which is an inseparable part of the poetic idiom of Pound and Browning leads to a series of paradoxes. Character has become divorced from action. A persona is projected who is never totally divorced from his creator, even though the creator may be visible only in 'the subtle joints of the craft, in the crannies perceptible only to the craftsman'[42]. T.S. Eliot in The Three Voices of Poetry views the personae of Pound and Browning as costume figures who must identify themselves before they speak if we are to comprehend them, and contrasts these figures with the Shakespearean character who has an existence independent of the creator:

> What we normally hear, in fact, in the dramatic monologue, is the voice of the poet, who has put on the costume and make-up either of some historical character, or of one out of fiction. His personage must be identified to us -- as an individual, or at least as a type -- before he begins to speak. If, as frequently with Browning, the poet is speaking in the role of a known character of fiction, like Caliban, he has taken possession of that character. And the difference is most evident in his 'Caliban upon Setebos'. In The Tempest, it is Caliban who speaks; in 'Caliban upon Setebos', it is Browning's voice that we hear, Browning talking aloud through Caliban. It was Browning's greatest disciple, Mr. Ezra Pound, who adopted the term 'persona' to indicate the several historical characters through whom he spoke: and the term is just.[43]

Eliot regards the projection of the mask as a technique designed for communication of a message, as the 'tale told to an audience'[44]. While it is obvious that the personal voice dominates in Browning, the creation in the Cantos of a 'world in which the creator is everywhere present, and everywhere hidden'[45] would seem to indicate that there may be other kinds of 'objective reality' than that of the drama. The Cantos are the "tale of the tribe" designed to renew civilization, but its poetic idiom embodies at the same time a mirror of reality into which the creator has disappeared.

IV

CONCLUSIONS

An attempt has been made in this thesis to determine the exact nature of Pound's debt to Browning -- a debt which Pound has frequently acknowledged in his prose and poetry. Taking as a logical point of departure for such a discussion Pound's indication in the first draft of Three Cantos that he had originally conceived of the Cantos as his Sordello, it becomes readily apparent that there are two main areas where the interests and ideas of these two poets seem to merge. In the first place, a consideration of the role of the artist in the modern world and his relation to his environment is a basic part of the subject matter of both poets. Secondly, both Pound and Browning are innovators in poetic technique, and Pound finds a great deal in Browning's poetic innovations that he wishes to study and assimilate.

A consideration of Browning's Sordello and Pound's early poetry has shown that both Pound and Browning define their aesthetic problems in the same terms. Both are concerned with the expression of the impulses, emotion and thoughts of the complex dynamic individual moving through an equally complex environment, which is in a continual state of flux. Both feel it necessary to define the areas of relationship between the individual and his environment and the role of the poet in this frequently inimical environment. While these

aesthetic considerations are obviously part of the post-enlightenment sensibility and therefore of vital concern to all nineteenth century poets, Browning differs from his contemporaries not so much in his statements regarding these aesthetic problems as in his embodiment in his poetic forms and techniques of the solutions to these problems that his successors were to adopt.

The nature and significance of Browning's poetic innovations then is clearly the focal point of Pound's interest in Browning. Browning, in his initial evaluation of the nature and function of poetry through the projection of a mask in Sordello, points the direction for the form and structure of both Mauberley and the Cantos. Browning's use of the mask in his dramatic monologues as a means of objectifying his own personal ideas and emotions has provided the pattern for a method of poetic expression which has dominated twentieth century poetry. Whether the modern poet projects his personal impulses into a clearly conceived persona, an object, or the internal landscape, he is following the method of Browning's dramatic monologues and is using this method of expression for the same reasons -- the necessity of using an objective vehicle for the expression of an individual sensibility that can be continually altered to meet the demands of communicating information about a fluid individual operating in a fluid environment.

It can be assumed that Pound is also interested in other areas of Browning's technical developments that foreshadow characteristic twentieth century poetic techniques. In his dramatic monologues, Browning pioneers in modern terms the conception of organic form -- his monologues take their shape from the subject matter and force

their way in the shape of the revelation. The technique of Browning's The Ring and the Book, which operates on a principle of juxtaposition, in which conventional perspective disappears, the truth emerging from the facts themselves, is the same technique underlying the ideogramic method of the Cantos. Browning's conversational style and adaptation of metrical forms to narrative, although limited in effectiveness by his attempts to achieve simultaneity through distortion of syntax and to squeeze the maximum meaning into the confines of a regular rhythmic line, had, according to Pound himself, a formative effect on Pound's style.

In spite of his continuing interest in Browning's poetry, Pound's formulation of the concept of the image marks his divergence from the theory and practice of Browning. Browning had inherited an aesthetic theory which considered the basis of art to be the expression of the moments of vision of extraordinary human beings who perceive more than or differently from their fellow human beings. As a result, Browning expresses the theory that poetry should be concerned with the expression and communication of ideas. Pound, on the other hand, regards art as based on the communication of facts relating to human experience by individuals who have developed the means of communicating these common experiences. The technique that Pound claims has enabled him to release this information relating to human experience is his development and use of the image, which, according to Pound, simultaneously unites idea, object and emotion.

While it appears that Pound's aesthetic theory provides a more convenient basis for the practice of poetry, the differences between the total effect of Pound's poetry and that of Browning are not exactly those which Pound emphasizes. Pound continually accuses Browning of being too concerned with the expression of ideas in poetry and yet in much of Browning's poetry, particularly in The Ring and the Book, and in the monologues of Men and Women and the Dramatis Personae, Browning approaches the representation of ideas in poetry by a method so indirect that it is almost impossible to determine his own attitude to any of the major areas of his subject matter. Applying to the poetry of both Pound and Browning T.S. Eliot's description of didactic poetry as 'poetry of moral exhortation, or poetry which aims to persuade the reader to the author's point of view about something',[1] it is apparent that both Pound and Browning are writing didactic poetry, in the sense that they have points of view which they are trying to persuade their readers to adopt. The method they use is also similar. They both attempt to retrace their steps by placing the values they have elicited from the flow of experience back into their representation of this dynamic flow, continually urging the reader to follow their path and discover for themselves the same values. Their poetry differs only in the degree to which Browning at times attempts to stop the flow and analyze, whereas Pound allows the values to emerge from a perpetually moving continuum of persona, image and rhythm.

FOOTNOTES

Preface

1. To René Taupin, May, 1928, The Letters of Ezra Pound; 1907-1941, ed. D.D. Paige (New York, 1950) 218

2. The only comment discovered dealing at any length with Browning's relation to twentieth century poetry is G. R. Strange's article, "Browning and Modern Poetry", Pacific Spectator, 8.3 (1954) 218-28.

3. Ezra Pound, Instigations (New York, 1920) 349. It is interesting to note that in a recent BBC interview recorded in 1959, Pound affirms that he is still studying Browning.

4. Instigations, 123,198,199,345,349; ABC of Reading (London, 1951) 78,188-91; The Spirit of Romance (Norfolk, Conn., n.d.), 16,27,132; Culture (Norfolk, Conn.,1938) 290; The Letters of Ezra Pound, 90,179,217,218; and others.

Chapter I

1. Pound, "Three Cantos", Poetry, 10.3 (1917) 114-115

2. Ibid., 114

3. Browning, Introd, to second edition of Sordello, June 9, 1863, reprinted on page 178 of The Works Of Robert Browning (Centenary Edition), ed. F.G. Kenyon. 10 Vols. London: Smith, Elder, (1912) All quotations from Browning are taken from this edition unless otherwise stated.

4. Browning, Sordello, I,567-571

5. Pound, "Three Cantos", Poetry, 10.3(1917) 113

6. The Cantos of Ezra Pound (London, 1954), II, 1-9

7. 'Periplum, not as land looks on a map/ but as sea bord seen by men sailing', Canto LIX, 28-29

8. Pound, "The Flame", Selected Poems (London, 1948) p.68

9. Browning, Sordello, I, 523-536

10. Ibid. II, 381-397

11. Ibid. II, 429-438, 440-442

12. Ibid. II, 570-579

13. Ibid. II, 588-595

14. Ibid. II, 725-729

15. Ibid. III, 23-34

16. Ibid. III, 617-622

17. Ibid. III, 625-630

18. Ibid. III, 631-632

19. Ibid. III, 636-639

20. John Bayley, The Romantic Survival (London, 1957) 9

21. Walter Pater, The Renaissance (London, 1907) 234-235

22. Sordello, III, 1-5

23. Ibid., I, 390-391

24. S.A. Brooke, The Poetry of Robert Browning (New York, 1902) 200-201

25. S.W. Holmes, "Browning's Sordello and Jung", PMLA, 56 (1941) 777

26. W.C. DeVane, A Browning Handbook (New York, 1955) 40

27. Pauline, 268-278

28. Ibid., 523-528

29. Ibid., 593-600

30. Ibid., 940

31. Ibid., 969-970

32. Cleon, 231-250, 272

33. Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau, 551-555

34. Mr. Sludge, "the Medium", 908-911

35. Fifine at the Fair, LXXX, 1357-1363

36. Ibid., LXXXII, 1396-1398

37. Ibid., LXXXIV, 1469-1471

38. The Ring and the Book, X, 373-376

39. Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau, 2123-2134

40. The relevance of this idea to Browning's own point of view is apparent in a letter written to Elizabeth Barrett, March 12, 1845: 'I have no pleasure in writing myself -- none, in the mere act -- though all pleasure in the sense of fulfilling a duty -- But I think you like the operation of writing as I should like that of painting or making music, do you not? The Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Barrett, 1845-1846 (New York, 1898) I, 41

41. Fifine at the Fair, LXI, 943-955

42. Ibid., LXIII, 1001-1007

43. F.R.G. Duckworth, Browning, Background and Conflict (New York, 1932) 183-194

44. Robert Browning to Elizabeth Barrett, Jan. 13, 1845, The Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Barrett, 6

45. Robert Browning to Elizabeth Barrett, Feb. 11, 1845, Ibid., 16-17

46. Browning's Essay on Shelley (London, 1903) 38-39

47. 'Those impressions of the individual mind to which, for each one of us, experience dwindles down, are in perpetual flight; . . . each of them is limited by time, and . . . as time is infinitely divisible, each of them is infinitely divisible also; all that is actual in it being a single moment, gone while we try to apprehend it, of which it may be more truly said that it has ceased to be than that it is.' Pater, The Renaissance, 235

48. Cristina, 17-32

49. W. Pater, The Renaissance, 237

50. S.F. Gingerich, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning (Ann Arbor, 1911) 199

51. Paracelsus, V, 681-685, 687-692

52. Passages from the Letters of John Butler Yeats, selected by Pound, (Churchtown, 1917) 19-20, 37

53. Donald Davie, Articulate Energy (London, 1955) 1-4

54. Pound, "Vorticism", Fortnightly Review, DLXXIII (New Series) (1914) 463

55. J.J. Espey, Ezra Pound's Mauberley, A Study in Composition (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1955) 83

56. "The Age Demanded", Selected Poems, pp. 184-185

57. Vorticism, 467-468

58. T.S. Eliot, Introduction to The Selected Poems of Ezra Pound, 12-13

59. Pound, "Arnold Dolmetsch", Literary Essays of Ezra Pound (London, 1954) 431. Cf. Yeats, Autobiographies (London, 1955) 503: 'I think that all happiness depends on the energy to assume the mask of some other self; that all joyous or creative life is a rebirth as something not oneself, something which has no memory and is created in a moment and perpetually renewed'.

60. "The Tree", Selected Poems, p.31

61. "Paracelsus in Excelsus", Selected Poems, p57

62. "Coda", Selected Poems, p.108

63. Jacques Maritain, Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry (New York, 1953) 27-28

64. Culture, 152

65. "The Tree", Selected Poems, p.31

66. "A Song of the Degrees", Selected Poems, pp.101-102

67. "The Flame", Selected Poems, pp.67-68

68. "Translators of Greek", Literary Essays, 267

69. Vorticism, 467

70. "Translators of Greek", Literary Essays, 267

71. Vorticism, 464

72. Ibid., 463-464

73. "A Retrospect", Literary Essays, 9

74. Vorticism, 469

75. "A Retrospect", Literary Essays, 4

76. Vorticism, 466

77. Ezra Pound to Harriet Monroe, Jan., 1915, The Letters of Ezra Pound, 49

78. "Date Line", Literary Essays, 76-77

79. T.S. Eliot, "Swinburne as Poet", Selected Essays 1917-1932 (London, 1932) 312-313

80. "Calvalcanti", Literary Essays, 152-154

81. "How to Read", Literary Essays, 21-22

82. Canto LXXIV, 172-175

83. Vorticism, 467

84. Canto LXXXIII, 194-200

85. "Tenzone", Selected Poems, p.91

86. Sordello, II, 788-793

87. Ibid., II, 617-633

88. Ibid., V, 250-264

89. Ibid., V, 506

90. Ibid., III, 582-583

91. Ibid., V, 524-538

92. Ibid., V, 567-575

93. Ibid., V, 599-601

94. Ibid., V, 611-613

95. Ibid., V, 620-627

96. Ibid., III, 824-832

97. Ibid., III, 864-868

98. Ibid., III, 928

99. J.H. Buckley, The Victorian Temper (London, 1952) 143

100. Quoted by J.H. Buckley, Ibid., 37

101. Quoted by J.H. Buckley, Ibid., 143

102. Quoted by S.H. Palmer in "The Monologue of Browning", HTR 11.2(1918) 134

103. Robert Browning to W.G. Kingsland, Nov.27, 1868, The Letters of Robert Browning (New Haven, 1933) 128-129

104. Robert Browning to Miss Isabella Blagden, Aug. 19, 1865
Ibid., 90

105. Old Pictures in Florence, XXIX, 225-232

106. Popularity, XI, 51-55

107. Ibid., XII, XIII, 56-65

108. Pictor Ignotus, 50-54, 57-64

109. Paracelsus, V, 351-357

110. Passages from the Letters of John Butler Yeats, 41

111. Fifine at the Fair, XLIV, 685-694

112. Paracelsus, III, 701-706

113. Balaustion's Adventure, 2416-2425

114. Old Pictures in Florence, XII-XIV, 89-108

115. Pippa Passes, II, 65-72

116. The Ring and the Book, I, 86-90

117. Ibid., I, 364-366

118. Ibid., I, 463-464

119. Ibid., XII, 858-867

120. Transcendentalism, 3-4

121. "Amphibion", Fifine at the Fair, XII, XIV

122. Fifine at the Fair, LXV, 1053-1055, 1059-1062

123. Edward Dowden, The Life of Robert Browning (London, 1935) 396

124. Popularity, III, 15-20

125. Paracelsus, IV, 450-453, 504-522

126. Ezra Pound to William Carlos Williams, 21 October, 1908. The Letters of Ezra Pound, 4. Herbert Read in The Tenth Muse (London, 1957) 262, seems to have interpreted this extract from a letter in a wider context as a pernicious dislocation of the artist from his society: 'A man who sets out (1908) with the idea that 'no art ever yet grew by looking into the eyes of the Public' is bound to find himself increasingly isolated from the social matrix that ensures "sanity" (which admittedly may be no more than an accepted code of conduct). Pound started kicking against the pricks from the moment he landed in Europe, and the inertia of the brute that bore the pricks produced in him the frenzy of shrill vituperation, scatological abuse, and mere spluttering invective which give his letters their wearisome unity.' It seems clear that, placing this possibly obscure statement of Pound's in the context of his poetry and criticism, what Pound meant to underline here was not the divorce of the artist from his public, but the necessary distinction between the serious artist who does his job without consulting his popularity rating, and the best seller writer whose serious study is market research.

127. "E.P. Ode Pour L'Election de son Sepulchre", II, Selected Poems, p.174

128. "Mr. Nixon", Selected Poems, pp.178-179

129. "Tenzone", Selected Poems, p.91

130. "In Durance", Selected Poems, pp.47-48

131. "Salutation the Second", Selected Poems, p.94

132. Ibid., pp.94-95

133. "Commission", Selected Poems, p.96

134. "Salvationists", III, Selected Poems, p.104

135. "The Rest", Selected Poems, p.100

136. "E.P. Ode Pour L'Election de son Sepulchre", Selected Poems, p.179

137. "Causa", Selected Poems, p.96

138. Active Anthology (London, 1933) 9

139. "The Serious Artist", Literary Essays, 50-51

140. Ibid., 51

141. Culture, 51

142. Ibid., 48

143. "How to Read", Literary Essays, 20

144. "The Teacher's Mission", Literary Essays, 58

145. "The Troubadours -- Their Sorts and Conditions", Literary Essays, 94

146. Culture, 16-17

147. "How to Read", Literary Essays, 21

Chapter II

1. P. Valéry, Fragments from "Introduction to the Writings of Leonardo da Vinci", Selected Writings (New York, 1950) 93

2. 'In sourer moments one sometimes feels that half the contemporary critical machine is geared to the indirect debunk. It is not the debunk direct, as practised by Lytton Strachey, a comparatively straightforward gleeful exposing of the feet of clay and wholesome just because of that element of glee: the indirect debunk wears a long and serious face, the features fixed in an emblem of solemn enquiry, and masquerades as a sincere effort "to approach the understanding of the works through a better and more intimate knowledge of the man". Laudable endeavour! and yet the hidden motive is the reduction of the extraordinary man to the common norm, the assurance to the reader that he need not feel inferior or envious or admiring or abased, that Milton, Shelley, Arnold are "just folks", who happened to take up literature rather than real-estate or engineering.' Hilary Corke, "Bright-un -- or Rotting Dean?", a review of The Personality of Jonathan Swift by Irwin Ehrenpreis, Encounter (October, 1959) 85-86

3. Pound, "T.S. Eliot", Literary Essays, 419-420

4. Browning, Fra Lippo Lippi, 1-3

5. Pound, "Cino", Selected Poems, p.34

6. Ezra Pound to William Carlos Williams, October 21, 1908, The Letters of Ezra Pound, 3-4

7. Fifine at the Fair, XCV, 1690-1694

8. Robert Browning to Elizabeth Barrett, May 24, 1845, The Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Barrett, 76, 78

9. Quoted by W.C. DeVane in A Browning Handbook, 46

10. Quoted in Ibid., 41

11. Robert Browning to T.J. Nettleship, March 10, 1889, The Letters of Robert Browning, 303

12. Quoted in "Preface" to Dearest Isa. Robert Browning's Letters to Isabella Blagden (Austin, 1951) v

13. Mr. Sludge, 'The Medium', 1431-1438, 1441-1442

14. Fifine at the Fair, CIII, 1814-1818

15. Paracelsus, I, 728-729, 733-737

16. Bishop Blougram's Apology, 1-12

17. Ibid., 395-396

18. C.M. Bowra, The Creative Experiment (London, 1949) 24

19. Donald Smalley, ed. Browning's Essay on Chatterton (Cambridge, Mass., 1948) 91

20. Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau, 80-88

21. Henry James, Notes on Novelists (London, 1914) 316

22. "On his own Face in a Glass", Selected Poems, p.58

23. "Cino", Selected Poems, p.34

24. Ibid., 34-35

25. "Famam Librosque Canto", Selected Poems, pp.42-43

26. G.S. Fraser, "Pound: Masks, Myths, Man" in Ezra Pound: A Collection of Essays, edited by Peter Russell (London, 1950) 173

27. "La Fraisne", Selected Poems, p.32

28. "Near Perigord", Selected Poems, p.148

29. Wyndham Lewis, Time and Western Man (Boston, n.d.) 73

30. F.R. Leavis, New Bearings in English Poetry (London, 1961) 136

31. Ezra Pound and E. Fenollosa, Noh, or Accomplishment, a Study of the Classical Stage of Japan (London, 1916) 17

32. Ibid., 51

33. Ibid., 120

34. Vorticism, 461

35. Ibid., 463-4

36. "The Return", Selected Poems, p.85

37. "Heather", Selected Poems, p.113

38. Canto LXXIV, 1-24

39. Quoted by Forrest Read in "The Pattern of the Pisan Cantos", Sewanee Review 65.3 (1957) 404

Chapter III

1. Polite Essays (London, 1937) 193

2. Culture, 204

3. Make It New (London, 1934) 335

4. "A Retrospect", Literary Essays, 11

5. Fifine at the Fair, XCII, 1630-1638, 1645-1648

6. Abt Vogler, VI, VII, 41-56

7. Ibid., XI, 84

8. Sordello, II, 588-595

9. Andrea del Sarto, 194-203

10. Parleying with George Bubb Dodington, 40-47

11. Mrs. S. Orr, A Handbook to the Works of Robert Browning (London, 1930) 8

12. "On the Cliff", James Lee, V, 19-30

13. Fifine at the Fair, LXXII, 1188-1198; LXXIII, 1202-1206 LXXIV, 1213-1218

14. G.K. Chesterton, Robert Browning (London, 1903) 48

15. W. Bagehot, "Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning", Literary Essays (London, 1905) II, 366

16. "A Retrospect", Literary Essays, 4

17. Ibid., 4

18. Vorticism, 466

19. "A Retrospect", Literary Essays, 6

20. "In a Station of the Metro", Selected Poems, p.113

21. Max Ernst, "Inspiration to Order", The Creative Process, ed. B. Ghiselin (New York, 1961) 66

22. "Fan-piece, for her Imperial Lord", Selected Poems, p.113

23. T.E. Hulme, Speculations (London, 1949) 134

24. Ernest Fenollosa, The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry, ed. Ezra Pound and published with Confucius, the Unwobbling Pivot and the Great Digest, trans. by Pound (Washington, n.d.) 60

25. Canto XXIX, 163-172

26. Canto VII, 1-10

27. Canto VIII, 155-175

28. W.B. Yeats, A. Vision (London, 1962) 4-5

29. Ezra Pound to Hubert Creekmore, February, 1939, The Letters of Ezra Pound, 321

30. "A Retrospect", Literary Essays, 9

31. Quoted by Pound in ABC of Reading (London, 1951) 188

32. Ibid., 91

33. Roma King, The Bow and the Lyre (Ann Arbor, 1957) and Park Honan, Browning's Characters (New Haven, 1961)

34. Roma King, The Bow and the Lyre (Ann Arbor, 1957) 19

35. Rabbi Ben Ezra, XVI, 91-96

36. "A Retrospect", Literary Essays, 9-10

37. "Famam Librosque Canto", Selected Poems, p.43

38. "The Tradition", Literary Essays, 91

39. "Sestina:Altaforte", Selected Poems, p.54

40. Canto I, 1-18

41. Canto XXVII, 75-76

42. Pound, The Spirit of Romance, 88

43. T.S. Eliot, "The Three Voices of Poetry", On Poetry and Poets (London, 1957) 95

44. Ibid., 96

45. Ibid., 102

Conclusions

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